



WHERE IT'S AT



A RESEARCH GUIDE FOR
COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

by JILL HAMBERG

with PAUL BOOTH, MIMI FEINGOLD, and CARL WITTMAN

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Knowledge For What ?

Community research and the Central Intelligence Agency have one thing common to both -- and it's not foundation money. It's that both require the gathering of information, not for detached academic "research", but instead for "intelligence" purposesthat is, the applied use of information.

While the C.I.A. of course utilizes data in very different ways than a community organization, techniques for amassing it may be somewhat similar. The good community researcher finds himself part spy, part journalist and part academician, borrowing methods and style where appropriate.

But techniques are just one small part of the picture. Information itself is neutral -- what gives it political and social content is the choice of material gathered and the use to which it is put. In suggesting the kinds of questions one should ask in doing community research, this guide makes several assumptions:

- it assumes that the community organizations involved see basic social change as necessary to end poverty and achieve a decent society in America;
- it assumes that poverty is a problem which cannot be solved by increased material resources alone;
- it assumes that a major cause and effect of poverty is that the poor, as well as other people, are powerless in the face of massive corporate, welfare, housing, educational and other bureaucracies;
- it assumes, therefore, that the issue of control is crucial, control over small everyday decisions as well as major national and international policies.

Control takes many forms. It can be primarily economic or political; legal or illegal. The key decision-makers in any city -- the "power structure" or "establishment" -- are usually members of the economic and political elite, with influence sometimes reaching regional, national or international proportions.



Research of the "upper levels" of decision making -- who the "big guys" are and how they wield their power -- is usually called power structure research. In the development of long-range strategy, this kind of research is necessary. And if it is available, it is often valuable in understanding why certain decisions are made.

Without it, we are like a swimmer in treacherous waters -- he can see, perhaps, where he wants to get, and that he has to get through these waves, avoiding the sharks, being careful to use his strength well, pushing hard at some times and just staying afloat other times. But he is not aware of the tides and the currents, which really determine where he is going and whether he'll get there. No aware, that is, unless he has good accurate power structure research.

Despite this, the swimmer still has to keep swimming. Another kind of research -- the kind this manual is mostly about -- is how to keep going day-to-day. It is more immediately relevant, for community organizers have to solve problems all the time, now.

The rent-striker with a dispossession notice doesn't really care if the life insurance company holds most of the mortgages in the area -- she

wants to know what to do when the sheriff comes. An industrialist may indeed control people's ultimate destiny, but a victim of police brutality thinks first about the cops, not about the man-behind-the-man-behind-the-man.

The institutions confronted by community organizations -- the welfare and police departments, boards of education, housing authorities, etc. -- are one or two levels removed from the heart of the power elite. The main task for the community researcher -- working day to day with community organizers and people suffering from the outward manifestations of the system -- is to figure out how these institutions exercise control, and what their relationship is to each other and to the centers of power.

This means that poverty cannot be treated as an isolated problem. All too often the images of America held by people in the movements for social change resemble the responses of the fabled blind men who were asked to describe an elephant: the five men were each permitted to touch the animal,



america, the elephant

but their descriptions were as varied as the textures of the five parts -- trunk, tusk, ear, leg and tail -- that each respectively was allowed to feel.

Similarly, activist groups view America from their own special vantage points:

- the peace movement sees in America the seeds of a military state which is bent on being the unwanted policeman of the world.
- civil rights and black power advocates see America as a basically racist society devoted to denying freedom to Negroes and other minority groups.
- the poor see America as a hypocritical carrot-and-stick proposition -- with a limited welfare dole and war on poverty on the one hand, and billy clubs and tear gas on the other.
- parts of the labor movement see an automating America producing higher profits and fewer jobs
- students and young people see an affluent, but authoritarian America in which education and employment produce alienation and disaffection

Research can help provide some sight, and insight, into the nature of the whole "animal." Through action, an attempt can be made to capture the beast and make it human.

Good luck!

Some General Hints

Most of the information you need is not secret. It's published in books, reports, public documents, statutes, manuals and newspapers usually available to almost everyone. What cannot be combed from the printed page can often, and as reliably, be obtained by talking to people with some knowledge of the situation.

You should carefully consider how you want to approach different kinds of sources. In some cases there is no need to identify yourself at all (e.g. in a library), but to obtain cooperation in most other instances you will probably want to use a "cover" -- i.e. pretending you have a "legitimate" reason for wanting the information you're after.

No matter how you decide to approach your sources, be certain that the community organization with which you're affiliated approves. This is particularly important if you intend to be honest with your sources about who you're gathering the information for. In effect you are then representing the community organization to the outside world -- a couple of tactless questions could cause considerable damage to organizing efforts.

Getting Information

Government Agencies:

Many states and the federal government have laws requiring that most public documents have to

How to Find Out "Who" Someone Is . . .



Let's say you know the name of a slum landlord, a welfare commissioner, a corporation executive or government official -- but you want to know who he really is. The background information you seek might include his address, business and family connection, real estate holdings, life style (church, school and social connections), degree of influence in the power structure, etc. Informal sources are best for getting leads and inside dope on the guy; see the following check-list for directories, public records and other written sources:

	see page
City Directory	8
Newspaper clipping files	7
Court records	54
Poor's Register and Moody's Manuals	69
Who's Who	69
Real estate ownership	18
Public officials	35

The most effective and universal "cover" is to pose as a student doing a term paper or thesis. If you decide to adopt this identity, make sure you act and dress the role.

Although you may know a good deal about a subject already, it's a good idea to start asking the person you're interviewing general questions and casually mention what you're really after. You're likely to be more believable that way and also discover things you didn't know before.

Your cover need not always be as a researcher. For instance, one way to find out about a factory is to say you're a guy looking for a job -- you can actually apply for employment, as well as talk with people in nearby luncheonettes and taverns.

be open for public inspection. These are usually called "Public Information", "Right-to-Know" or "Freedom of Information" laws. Ask a friendly lawyer or law student to get you a copy of your state law and also have him check recent interpretations of it, since many such laws are vague and confusing.

The law will probably cover access to administrative regulations, studies, reports, names and salaries of government employees, official correspondence, minutes of meetings, and other things considered to be "public records." The law may also say something about the right to copy by hand or obtain copies of the records. The federal Freedom of Information Act, which went into effect in July, 1967, covers only files of federal agencies.

Just because you have a legal right to information, it doesn't mean you'll be able to get it. If a government official refuses to release data you can:

- ask to see his superior (low-level government employees might be reluctant to give out information if it's an unusual request or just for arbitrary reasons);
- try to get someone with better "connections" to get what you want (e.g. case workers can smuggle out welfare manuals);
- fight it out in court and/or hold a demonstration if you think you've a right to the information.

Most federal publications are printed and distributed by the United States Government Printing Office (USGPO). The Superintendent of Documents of USGPO issues numerous price lists, grouping by subject all available publications. Each federal agency also releases a list of its own publications.

If you order through USGPO you have to pay in advance and it usually takes a couple of weeks. In general, you can obtain most documents free and faster by writing to your Congressman or Senator, or directly to the agency or congressional committee involved.

It's a good idea to get on the mailing lists of public agencies to receive bulletins, notices of hearings and public meetings, news releases, etc. There is usually no charge for this.

Newspapers:

It's essential that you read at least one local newspaper regularly; if your city has several, try to keep up with all the major ones.

The general news pages will keep you up-to-date on local issues, people in the news, important upcoming meetings and events. There are other sections you should also get into the habit of reading:

- state and local political columns;
- the business section (see also p. 68);
- social news (gives some insight into who knows who in local "high society");
- legal notices (long columns of fine print buried in back pages -- usually contain notices of commission hearings, city council meetings, election information, tax and mortgage foreclosures, transfers of property, etc.)

Keep your own clipping file for reference. Also investigate the possibility of using the newspaper's own library and clipping file. If you can

gain access, it can be an invaluable source of background and history on almost any local individual, issue or institution; if you can't, a sympathetic newspaper reporter may be able to check things out for you.

Libraries:

The main branch of the public library is likely to have a special collection of pictures, books, and newspaper clippings about your city. The librarian in charge of these materials can probably be very helpful in steering you to the information you're looking for.

The library will also have a section or special branch devoted to business periodicals, reference works and other literature in the field (the Chamber of Commerce also may have an extensive business library open to the public).



You can gain access to important libraries ordinarily closed to the public (including private business collections) if you are a member of the Special Libraries Association, 31 East 10th St., New York, N.Y. Affiliate membership costs \$15 annually, but may be well worth it if you are researching an issue which requires special kinds of information.

The public library is also the place to check for recent books about your city or some aspect of it (e.g. urban renewal, education, politics, society, etc.) -- they are frequently written by journalists, political scientists or "insiders", and may contain interesting tidbits not found elsewhere.

Universities:

Large colleges, universities and associated research institutes have good libraries containing books, pamphlets, doctoral dissertations, reference works and reports about your city and state. In addition, there should be ample background material on specific issues.

By asking around in social science departments, you're likely to find a few professors and graduate students who have researched local issues. They can provide a good overview as well as specific leads.

Directories:

That common household item, the telephone book, should not be overlooked as a research tool. It's the first place to check for such things as slumlords' addresses and phone numbers, names and addresses of local unions and day-labor agencies (yellow pages).

For similar, but more extensive data, consult Polk's City Directory. If your city has an up-to-date one it will be in the local library or business library. The directory commonly lists the name, address, phone number and occupation (and sometimes even place of employment) of almost every family, business and organization in the city, arranged by name, address, and phone number.

Professionals:

In relation to community organization, sympathetic professionals can play several roles -- as sources of information, money, or services. A lawyer, doctor, city planner, social worker or teacher can offer knowledge of his particular field and also an idea of prevailing practices in your area (e.g. lawyers can tell you inside things about the courts, doctors about hospitals, social workers about the welfare department, etc.)

But, most professionals are used to giving advice -- it's part of their jobs. You may want both advice and information, but it's a good idea to learn how to sift out one from the other so you and the community organization know on what basis decisions are to be made.

Informal Sources:

One talkative guy with "inside" information is easily worth his weight in books, reports and documents. Getting such guys to talk is the main problem. Newspaper reporters, labor leaders, present or past politicians and government employees can provide you with important leads and a fairly accurate over-all perspective on what's happening locally.

If you approach them cold you will probably get an icy response (e.g. labor organizers and politicians will think you're a spy from their opposition). Therefore, it is wise to cultivate any "ins" you might have to reach such sources.

People in the Community:

For first-hand knowledge of the ways in which

the forces of authority and power oppress and exploit them, the people of poor communities are unquestionably the best sources. If you are an organizer, you have direct contact with the people and the issues. If you are a researcher, either ask organizers to obtain what information is necessary or arrange to do a formal or informal survey in the neighborhood (see p. 79).

Keeping Information

Write it down...information stored in your head doesn't do anyone else any good, and you'll probably forget much of it anyway. It doesn't have to be fancy or elaborate -- just try to keep notes legible and write-ups of interviews understandable. This is especially important if you're just doing research on a short-term basis; it would be a shame if someone duplicated your efforts because they didn't know you had already done the work.

File it in an easy-to-find way. You won't be around all the time, so make sure other people understand your filing system.

Use a card file where appropriate...it's much easier to put together bits and pieces of data on individuals (e.g. slumlords, governmental officials, corporation executives) if you use index cards, cross-referencing where necessary.

Using Information

You can't change anything by just knowing about it. Research has to be combined with education and action to have any effect.

It's a good idea to get into the habit of publicizing as fast as possible any information you gather: put notes, signs, newspaper clippings and little write-ups on a bulletin board prominently displayed in the community project office; write articles for the group's newsletter and work information into leaflets; when you have more time and enough information on one issue, help draw up a pamphlet or manual. Decision-making in the community is likely to be more broad-based if information is spread around rather than shared only by a small inner core of activists.

Research can be used in:

- day-to-day organizing work: If you're organizing a rent strike, for example, you might want to know the name and address of the owner of the building, or what constitutes a housing code violation.

- education of organizers and people in the community: Use information to develop charts, posters, pamphlets, short "textbooks", filmstrips and other materials for use in general organizing, meetings, seminars, etc.

- planning strategy: Knowledge of the power

Related Research Manuals

Overall Community Research:

- Roland L. Warren, Studying Your Community, Russell Sage Foundation, 1955; The Free Press (paperback) 1965 (only introduction new, \$2.45): dated, lengthy, but comprehensive survey of community issues; oriented mostly toward social work types.
- Robert K. Lamb, Suggestions for a Study of Your Hometown, article in Summer, 1952 issue of Human Organization; mimeo reprints available from Radical Education Project, 510 E. William St., Ann Arbor, Mich.: short discussion of techniques used in getting an overview of a small-ish city.
- Jack Minnis, The Care and Feeding of Power Structures (see →)

Defense Industry:

- Blood Money or How President Johnson Builds the Great Society, prepared and distributed by National Coordinating Committee to End the War in Vietnam, 107 State St., Madison, Wisc. 25¢: includes "a look at the aerospace industry, who gets defense contracts, how you can find out who is making blood money in your community".
- Chemical and Biological Warfare Research and the Universities, available from Committee for Academic Integrity, 124 E. 40th St., suite 203, New York, N.Y. 10016: lists sources of information.

Agri-business:

- How to Research a Rural Community by Ken Blum, appeared in Oct. 1966 issue of The Movement; also articles on California Agri-business by Brooks Penney in July and Feb. 1966 issues -- write The Movement, 449 14th st., San Francisco, Calif.

The Draft

- Selective Service or the Manpower Channelers by Peter Henig in Jan. 20, 1967 issues of New Left Notes (p. 80); reprints available from SDS New York Regional Office, 41 Union Square West, New York, N.Y.: how to find out the jurisdiction of your draft board, its classification picture, and the names of its members.

structure, what government levels are responsible for what, and existing laws and regulations are all helpful in figuring out where your opponent is vulnerable. Census data and other population and economic trends come in handy in making an initial choice of an area in which to organize.

• formulating demands: In drawing up a list of demands you will need to know what exists already, for instance, number of children per class, average monthly welfare payment, etc.

• muckraking: People in poor communities already sense that things are pretty bad, but middle-class suburbanites are not as convinced. The object of most exposure and muckraking is to gain allies among liberals who would be horrified if scandalous goings-on were brought to light.

Power Structure Research

For several years now the only decent thing available on power structure research has been The Care and Feeding of Power Structures, a short paper by Jack Minnis. It has become such a classic in the field that such research is often called "Minnis-type research."

A revised and expanded version of Care and Feeding has recently been published and is available from the Southern Conference Education Fund, 3210 W. Broadway, Louisville, Ky. for 50¢. Minnis puts his knowledge of the power structure and politics to work in a weekly piece called "Life with Lyndon in the Great Society" which appears in the National Guardian (p. 80).

A good example of how power structure research can be put to use on the local level is a "Life-With-Lyndon" type newsletter put out each week by Gren Whitman. The newsletter, called "A View From Here", focuses on Baltimore and Maryland issues and power structure, while bringing in national concerns where appropriate. Subscription is free; write to "A View From Here", 2809 N. Calvert St., Baltimore, Md. 21218.

Excerpted below is part of the beginning of a study of the Nashville power structure. It provides a good framework for such research almost anywhere:

"...a group from the North Nashville Project of the Southern Student Organizing Committee are engaged in a study of the power structure of Nashville, Tennessee. This is a preliminary report on the study, which is still in progress. We will present the procedures used in determining the power structure and use some of the Nashville results to illustrate the value as well as the limitations of such a study.

"What is meant by the term 'power structure?' We mean by it that there exists a relatively small group of men who make the decisions that crucially determine the nature and quality of life in a local community. These people are only rarely elected governmental officials; usually they are the men who control the economy of the community.

"Social scientists will argue about whether there

exists a single power structure that makes all the important community decisions, and there is much literature on this subject. For this kind of study, we must make an initial hypothesis that such a power structure exists, and then show that our facts bear this out.

"Given this, there are three basic techniques for determining the composition and influence of the power structure.

"(1) The first and most widely used technique involves interviewing a large number of people prominent in various community activities and groups and asking who they consider the decision makers.

"(2) Another approach is to decide from an initial study which are the important groups and businesses in the community and then designate the leaders of these as members of the power structure.

"(3) Yet another approach is to focus on recent decisions which were vital to the life of the community and then choose the power structure from members of the groups which appear to play a major role in making these decisions, such as Mayor's Committee, Chamber of Commerce Committees, etc.

"The first approach, involving direct interviews was out of the question for us, as it will be for all who do not have ties to recognized groups involved in social science research. The second approach involving community positions is a fairly good one, but it requires that the investigator make a judi-

cious choice of the groups that are important to the economy and politics of the city, which is not easy for an inexperienced person to do. Furthermore, this approach tends to view the rich and powerful as a single monolithic group, whereas in any city there are differences in approach between old and new wealth, as well as struggle for power among various factional groupings.

"The final approach deals directly with the decision-making process, which is what we are most interested in. The difficulty with it, of course, is that people of great power tend to stay out of public view as much as possible, coming out only when their interests are seriously threatened. Therefore this approach is useful only if there have recently been serious crises in community life.

"In the case of Nashville, such crises have indeed arisen over the establishment of a metropolitan government for Nashville and Davidson County in 1962, the integration of public facilities in 1963, and the establishment of a unified, city-wide plan for urban renewal which is going on at present. Therefore this last approach was the one used in our study."

For how the authors of this report figured out who made these decisions and who actually made them, write for a copy of Nashville: A Preliminary Study of the Power Structure by David Kotelchuck and Ronda Stilley, either to (1) SSOC, Box 6403, Nashville, Tenn. 37212; or (2) REP, 510 E. William St., Ann Arbor, Mich.



muckraking

Housing

Housing -- its cost, condition and control -- is of central concern to people in poor communities and consequently to community organizers as well. The following sections discuss how to get information about private housing (landlords and tenants), real estate ownership, public housing and urban renewal.

In most cities control of the housing market is largely in the hands of a few large real estate companies, exercised either through direct ownership or through influence of the Real Estate Board and government agencies such as the public housing or urban renewal authority.

It is these dominant real estate owners and developers that receive government subsidies in the form of urban renewal write-downs and Federal Housing Authority insured low-interest, long-term mortgages. This subsidization of private profit has been described by Charles Abrams as one aspect of "the business welfare state" and "socialism from the right."

Slum property, on the other hand, is generally marginal to the main housing market, and up to now, has received little direct government subsidization.

Widely-publicized schemes for government assistance to private enterprise to "revitalize" slum neighborhoods, would extend subsidies to a greater portion of the housing market in an effort to make slums (or rehabilitated ones) even more profitable.

The main real estate lobby in most cities is the Real Estate Board, so it's a good idea to check to see who its officers are and who takes out large advertisements in the local trade journal (to figure out the key companies).

Slumlords are likely to have their own organization (called something like the "Property Owners Association") which is separate from the more "respectable" Real Estate Board. There also may be groups of small home-owners.

Housing Statistics

To find out how to get a "housing portrait" of your city or neighborhood, see the census section (p. 82). Both in the census and most other government material, the term "dwelling unit" or "unit" is used to mean apartment or one-family house.

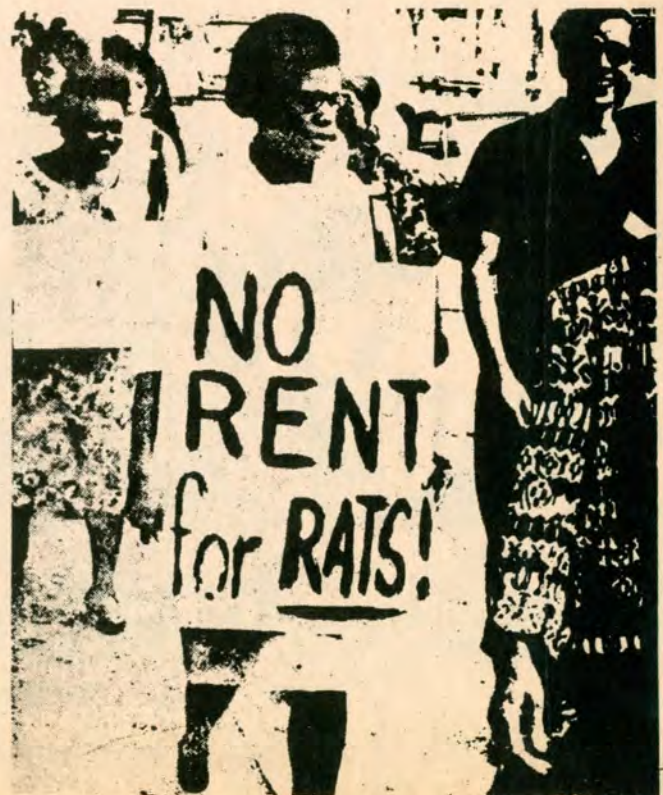
Fair Housing

Discrimination is a problem in all kinds of housing -- public and private, city and suburban. Despite the passage of many state and local "open housing" laws in the last few years, residential segregation has increased, and its current rhetoric notwithstanding, the federal government contributes to the creation of ghettos to a large extent.

Most fair housing campaigns have taken place in the suburbs, and gains made there have had little direct effect on low-income members of minority groups, since they can't afford to move to the suburbs.

Nevertheless, the impact of discrimination is no less severe in many poor communities: rents in black neighborhoods are higher than in white neighborhoods where the housing is of the same quality; the neighborhoods that organizers work in were created by block-busters reaping huge profits.

- Find out the real estate companies involved in block-busting operations (from people in the



neighborhood, company names on "for sale" signs, etc.) See p. 70 for how to find out more on these companies.

Check to see if there are any open housing laws in your city and state, how strong they are and whether there are any agencies in charge of enforcing these laws. (If so, are they enforced?) Also check the procedure for making a complaint. You might save yourself some trouble by contact-

ing local civil rights groups first to see if they have this information already.

, large and prominent companies sometimes own or hold the mortgages of segregated or nearly segregated housing developments (e.g. Metropolitan Life Insurance Company's sponsorship of Stuyvesant Town in New York City). Similarly see p. 70 for how to find out more about these companies.

Landlords and Tenants

"No rent for rats" has been the slogan and battle-cry of tenants protesting slum housing and high rents. In a phrase it symbolizes a tactic -- rent strike -- and a demand -- decent housing.

Since the first rent strikes in New York and Chicago after World War I and those in Harlem during the winter of 1963-64, new and sometimes dramatic ways have been tried by tenant groups to deal with problems of housing code enforcement, evictions and exorbitant rents.

Demands have included asking for legislation "legalizing" rent strikes, providing for receivership, and re-enacting rent control. Most recently some tenant groups have entered into collective bargaining agreements with landlords.

Basic to most tenant organizing have been pamphlets and leaflets indicating tenant rights and what to do in case of eviction. Forms listing housing code violations are also widely used in making complaints to the city.

Examples of very elaborate and complete booklets are:

- Tenant Action, a handbook for New York City

residents compiled by Architects' Renewal Committee in Harlem, Inc. (ARCH), 306 Lenox Ave. New York, N.Y. 10027 (\$1.25);

- Tenant Housing Manual, prepared by SDS and the American Institute of Architects Student Chapters of the University of Illinois, Chicago Circle, also contains a model tenant-landlord collective bargaining contract; available from Irv Himmelblau, 1321 W. Taylor, Chicago, Ill. 60607 (\$1.00);

- Housing Manual, prepared by a Committee of Agency Staff Members in Boston, Mass. (including some city agencies); available from AFSC, 350 Blue Hill Ave., Roxbury, Boston, Mass.

None of these pamphlets can be used directly in organizing because they are too long and complicated, but they are good sources of information for organizers. Tenant Manuals scheduled for completion by the fall of 1967 can be obtained from (1) Liz Butters, Center for Radical Research, Ida Noyes Hall, 1212 E. 59th St., Chicago, Ill; (2) Minneapolis Community Union Project, 1119 E. Franklin, Minneapolis, Minn., 55404.



Don't pay rent for rat

Housing Code

In most cities the housing code is a group of complicated ordinances dealing with health, fire hazards, plumbing, electrical fixtures, and zoning. In addition, there may be a state Tenement or Multiple Dwelling Law. The building code in some cities just regulates new construction and major rehabilitation, while in others it also applies to structural standards in old housing.

Obtaining a copy of the code in a simple usable form may require going to each municipal department responsible for enforcing the ordinances. There is a good chance, however, that the local War on Poverty, "better housing" group, or even a city agency may have already distilled the necessary information.

In addition to a list of housing code violations, most tenant organizations' complaint forms include the name and phone number of the department responsible for each kind of violation (plumbing, sanitary, combustibles, electrical, health) and sometimes the name of the official in charge.

It is usually possible to find out from any of these various departments if, according to their records, there are any uncorrected violations reported for a particular building.

The way the procedure is "supposed" to work is that after a tenant makes a complaint to the proper agency, an inspector is sent to the building. If he finds that the complaint is warranted (and if he is not paid off by the landlord), a report will be made to the department and the landlord will receive a notice that he must correct the violation within a certain period of time. Slumlords may find it cheaper to pay off "on the top" (the Mayor, head of central complaint department, etc.) rather than each individual inspector.

The threat of a fine or jail sentence is supposed to be the city's weapon in enforcing the housing code. Slumlords traditionally are given suspended jail sentences and light fines, which they consider "legitimate" business expenses.

Many judges are closely associated with slumlords or slumlords' lawyers. By attending sessions of court where housing code violations are heard (in some states, criminal charges are brought; in others, civil) you can get an idea of which slumlords and lawyers usually appear (check court calendar if you can't attend). Through informal sources, such as friendly attorneys, you might be able to discover possible collusion between judges, lawyers, and slumlords.

Since the court action is brought by the city, the tenant is usually not required to appear except

Going on Rent Strike ?

Do you know:

See Pages:

- Something about who really owns the building? 18
- What housing code violations are in the house? 14
- What to do in case of eviction? 15
- What happens if the house is condemned? 15

as a witness. In some cases a tenant can try to obtain a court order directing the landlord to fix up on the basis of provisions in a lease or the housing code itself. This means the initiative is with the tenant, rather than the city.

The tenant is more vulnerable to eviction if the burden of making the complaint rests on him rather than the city. Therefore, it is important to know whether inspectors ever make systematic checks of a whole neighborhood, or are just permitted to check violations at the request of a tenant. Likewise, if an inspector only reports a violation in the complaining tenant's apartment rather than also noting violations in the other parts of the building, it becomes easy for the landlord to know against whom to retaliate.

For a city to receive federal funds for urban renewal and public housing, it must demonstrate that it has complied with the housing code enforcement provisions of the "Workable Program for Community Improvement" (p.27). On paper, of course, the city will appear to comply with the regulations. If you want the city's statistics on number of inspectors, inspections made, violations reported and corrected, check the latest "Workable Program".

There are some federal funds available to cities for code enforcement through the Office of Economic Opportunity and the Federally Assisted Code Enforcement (F.A.C.E.) program of the Housing and Urban Development Department.

Receivership & Condemnation

Rather than ignoring major housing code violations, the city may declare a slum building "unfit for human habitation".

In a few (very few) cities, there are provisions for receivership. This usually means that the building is temporarily put under the control of a city department or a private third party (the "receiver"). The receiver uses rent payments and perhaps city funds to repair the building and then

tries to return the building to its owner. In many cases the legal process required to put a building under receivership takes a long time and sometimes the rent is raised after repairs have been made.

Variations of receivership include laws permitting tenants to repair the building and subtracting the costs from their rent (e.g. in California). Some cities in Pennsylvania permit tenants in buildings declared "unfit for human habitation" to pay rent into a special fund, called an escrow fund. If the landlord repairs the house within a year he gets the rent; if not, it's returned to the tenants.

The usual practice is to condemn a building that has been declared "unfit". If conditions are very serious, the tenants are ordered to move out. The city directs the owner either to repair the building or to have it demolished within a certain period of time. If the landlord does neither, the city starts court proceedings to acquire the property. The city then is supposed to demolish the building, and use the land or sell it at public auction.

The whole process can take many years to complete and consequently, tenants may continue to live in condemned buildings (and landlords or the city continue to collect rent) for quite some time.

Knowing whether or not a building has been condemned and whether or not it will be demolished can be important to organizers because:

- welfare recipients or people relocated from an urban renewal project may be placed in condemned housing;
- rent strikes are often broken by condemnation--the building is condemned, the tenants forced to move, then after a month or two the landlord starts renting again to other tenants, having made no repairs or only minimal ones;
- having unsafe vacant or burnt-out buildings in a neighborhood increases the danger of fire and makes it almost impossible to get fire insurance in such areas;
- the demand can be made of the city that after demolition, land be used for playground, small park, or if the plot is large enough, "scattered-site" low-income housing;
- the city is supposed to pay moving expenses for tenants displaced by "any government action", including code enforcement and condemnation (p.30).

There will be at least one city department (real estate, buildings, inspections, etc.) which can tell you if a receivership law of any kind exists. The same or a similar department will be in charge

of condemnation. You can check with it to see if a particular building has been condemned (there may also be a notice posted on the building), if and when it is scheduled for demolition, and if the city owns or is in the process of acquiring the property.

Eviction

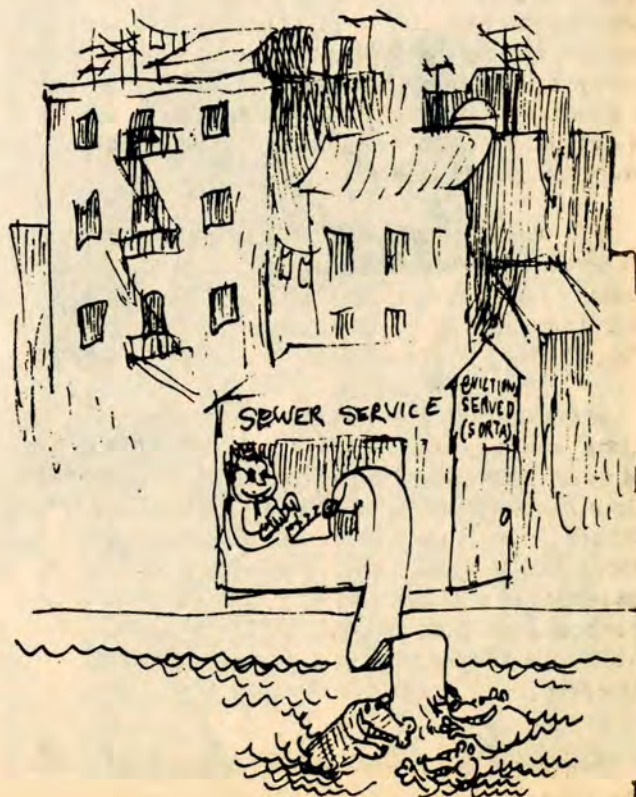
Anyone involved in organizing a rent strike or reporting housing code violations should have some information on what legal rights a tenant has (he hasn't many) if he receives an eviction notice. Landlord-tenant law is heavily weighted in favor of the landlord.

While the services of a lawyer are needed in most specific cases, there is some information which the organizer can find out, some of which he might want to publicize around the community.

Check with a lawyer or law student to learn how the eviction process actually works, and at which stages a lawyer's aid is essential.

Typically, the landlord takes out a dispossession (eviction) notice and gives or mails it to the tenant. The tenant has a certain number of days to go to court and to say he wants to contest the eviction.

If the tenant is never served with the dispossession notice (sometimes called "sewer service" because the notice is said to end up in the sewer rather than delivered to the tenant) or if he just doesn't res-



pond by a certain date, an official, such as a marshal or constable, will serve another eviction notice on the tenant usually stating that the tenant must leave the premises within a couple of days.

If the tenant doesn't receive the second notice or chooses to ignore it, the marshal, when the specified time is up, will order the tenant out and start removing his furniture. In some states and under the terms of some leases no prior notice is required before the final eviction notice is served.

A pamphlet, written mostly for lawyers and social workers, giving a detailed description of New York City eviction laws is a "Handbook of Landlord-Tenant Procedures and Law, With Forms", by Nancy E. LeBlanc. It is available free from Legal Services Unit of Mobilization for Youth, Inc., 214 E. 2nd St., New York, N.Y. 10009. Examples of eviction information for tenants are included in the housing manuals listed earlier.

Try sitting in on a few sessions (or check the court calendar) of the housing court where landlord-tenant cases are heard. It will be part of civil court, and probably not the same housing court where code violations are brought. But as with housing court for code violations, it may prove useful to investigate which landlords and lawyers are frequently present and their relation, if any, to the judge.

In some states and communities there are laws or legal precedents which give the tenant some protection if he is about to be evicted for non-

payment of rent or in retaliation for having reported a housing code violation.

For example, in New York, Illinois, and Massachusetts the welfare department is permitted to withhold rent if the building department has a record of uncorrected code violations. In New York any tenant can do the same.

Some courts are sympathetic to tenants who can prove that the landlord wants to evict them because they exercised their rights in complaining about conditions. Find out if these or similar laws or legal precedents exist in your area.

For organizations which can furnish lawyers in landlord-tenant cases see p.34. The Welfare Law Bulletin (p.) carries news of recent court decisions and legislation affecting landlord-tenant law.

Rent Control

When tenant groups and community organizations demand rent control, they usually mean that they want a law guaranteeing decent housing at decent rents. But not all rent control laws are designed to carry out this goal, and in practice even "good" rent control laws have their limitations.

Rent control went into effect nationwide during World War II. Because of the drastic shortage of housing, cities, operating under state enabling legislation, passed rent control ordinances designed to prevent rents from sky-rocketing in a tight housing market.

As construction of new housing picked up, controls were gradually lifted in all states except New York. Rents in New York City are still controlled in most buildings built before 1947, except for luxury apartments, where a shortage no longer exists. When the city-wide apartment vacancy rate hits 5% (it's little more than 3% now) control automatically will be lifted.

Unlike New York, many cities with declining populations actually have a housing surplus, although there is still a shortage of decent apartments. Therefore, any new rent control laws are not likely to be based on an absolute shortage of housing.

Enabling legislation passed in New Jersey in 1966, for instance, permits large cities to pass laws imposing rent control only on buildings officially declared substandard. If and when violations are corrected, rent control is supposed to be lifted for that building. Newark and Paterson have since enacted such ordinances.



Since not all rent control laws necessarily benefit tenants, it is important to carefully consider key provisions of state enabling acts or local ordinances that may be proposed. Aside from general questions which should be asked about any pending legislation (p.37), other things to look for are:

- If your city is trying to pass a rent control law, has the state yet enacted enabling legislation? For example, in the years immediately after 1958, when rent control was revoked in New Jersey, Newark passed three rent control laws, all of which were thrown out in court because the city didn't have the power to pass them at the time; it just gave Newark politicians a chance to say they voted for rent control without the chance of the law really going into effect.
- In what way are rents set? Does it allow for substantial profits to landlords? Does it freeze rents at levels that are already too high? Does

it permit large increases when one tenant moves out and another replaces him?

- Does it provide for receivership? If so, how complicated and lengthy a process is it for the city to put a building into receivership?
- Does it provide a legal basis for rent strikes?
- Does it protect tenants from unfair evictions?

With all its inadequacies, New York City's rent control law is still probably the best one around. The City Rent and Rehabilitation Administration, 280 Broadway, New York, N.Y., has material available on rent control in N.Y.C.

For a good critique of the New York law, in theory and in practice, write to the Metropolitan Council on Housing, 219 Seventh Ave., New York, N.Y. 10011. Met Council also has an "Organizing Handbook" (35¢) which applies mostly to New York, but still offers useful hints for people in other areas. Their monthly Tenant News (year sub \$1) is also helpful.



Real Estate Ownership

Owning and financing real estate is one way of holding power -- from the biggest industrial and financial giants down to the small-time slumlord. This power can take the form of determining the conditions in which people must live and how much they will have to pay for that "privilege", or if substantial enough it can be used to shape the development of entire cities.

The Sources

The exact procedure to follow in looking up information is different in each area depending on how records are indexed and the availability of special directories, but there are several basic sources which can be found almost anywhere.

Practically the best sources of informal information are title searchers. They study records affecting ownership, usually filed in county offices. They are employed by title insurance companies and lawyers to see if a property, before being sold, is owned "free and clear".

Having a wealth of information on legal and illegal practices in the real estate business, they may even give you leads on specific landlords, particularly if they think you are a student doing a paper on some obscure topic. They can also tell you the best way to find the information you're looking for.

Real estate is seldom classified by address alone. In most communities each plot of land is assigned a block and lot number and will be listed either that way or by the street address. Variations are common -- Washington, D.C. uses square and lot, and in Boston tax records are filed by ward. There will be a map or index which can be used to translate an address into a block and lot number, and vice versa.

Tax records are located in the tax office of each municipality and are also probably on file at the county tax board. Most likely it will be easier in the county offices to examine the books yourself. The information available in tax records will usually include:

- the address, sometimes called street number, block and lot number, and size of the property;



- the owner and the address where the tax notice is to be sent -- sometimes a lawyers' name and address is listed instead of the real owner; if the mailing address is the same as the property in question, it doesn't necessarily mean that the house is owner-occupied -- the superintendent might just collect mail for the landlord;
- the assessed value of the land and improvements;
- the use of the property -- e.g. parking lot, commercial, multiple dwelling, etc.

The way all this information is indexed varies -- it may be by address, by block and lot number, or by owner. There may be a small fee if the clerk has to look up the information for you.

Deeds and mortgages can be found in the office of the county clerk or registrar of deeds and mortgages.

Each deed is indexed at least two times: the grantor index is arranged by the seller of the property, the grantee index by the buyer. The index

will refer you to a book (liber) and page (folio) where a photostated copy of the deed is found. Deeds are also called "instruments" and "conveyances". Property when sold is considered "conveyed".

Mortgages are indexed in the same way: mortgagee index by the lender (banks, mortgage company, etc.) and mortgagor by the borrower (the one who is purchasing the property). In some areas records are kept on cards or in books giving ownership and mortgage information by address or by block and lot number.

Corporation records are of two kinds, incorporation papers and annual reports. Both are on file with the Secretary of State in the state capital and probably the incorporation papers can also be found in the county clerk's office of the county in which the corporation has its principal office

The incorporation papers are less useful because the "incorporators" may just be dummies -- secretaries, friends, etc. Annual reports usually list officers and members of board of directors, and are therefore more reliable.

If you're in luck a directory will be available which brings together some of the more important information.

For instance, in Washington, D.C., the Lusk Real Estate Directory lists by address, the owner, square and lot number, date of last sale, mortgage, and amount of mortgage (although it isn't very reliable). Usually real estate boards or private firms maintain excellent and up-to-date records of ownership, transactions, property value, etc. Access to these files generally requires membership in the real estate board (any property owner can join) or subscription to the service (the firm of a friendly lawyer may subscribe).

There may be a law requiring landlords or their agents to register their names with a city department, particularly if some form of receivership or rent control exists.

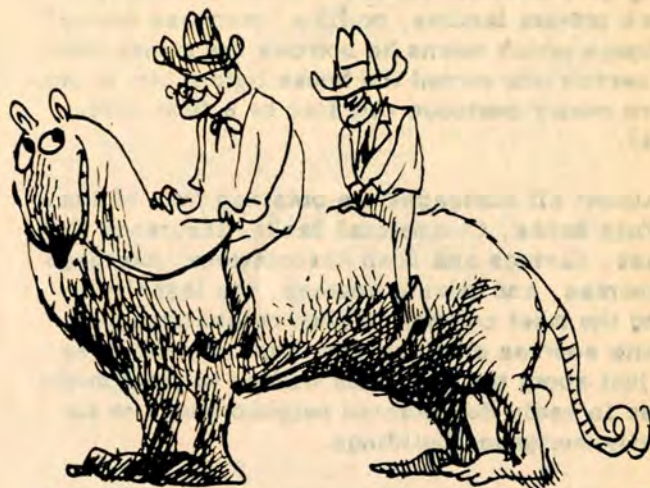
Some Background

Ownership

The three most common forms of real estate ownership are:

1. individual: one or more person's names are listed as the official owners; the person listed may turn out to be the wife, or a relative of the guy who really owns the property.

2. partnership: two or more people own property under a "trade" name -- for instance, the listing



might read Lyndon Johnson and Hubert Humphrey, T/A (trading as) J & H Great Society Co., a partnership registered in the State of Texas.

3. corporation: owner listed as company which has officers, has issued stock, and has filed incorporation papers. Some slumlords own most of their property under one corporation. Others set up a separate corporation for each property owned to limit liability, evade taxes or conceal the real identity of its owner. Also as a tax dodge, real estate may be transferred from one dummy corporation to another, all belonging to the same person or family.

Sometimes real estate is put "in trust" with a bank or individual. The trustee administers the running of the property but does not own it. For instance, an owner may set aside three tenements that he owns in trust for his children, appointing a bank as trustee. Slum property is often owned by a trust if tax advantages or anonymity can be gained in that way.

Mortgages

A mortgage is a loan made for the purpose of buying, building, or repairing property in which the property itself is used as security (also called collateral) for the loan.

For instance, a man buys a house costing \$10,000. He makes a downpayment of \$3,000 (30%) in cash and borrows \$7,000 from a bank in the form of a mortgage to complete the \$10,000 he must pay the seller. He agrees to pay the bank back the \$7,000, plus interest, in equal monthly installments over a period of 20 years, giving the bank the right to take over his house (foreclose) if he doesn't make the payments.

If someone buys a house that already has an unpaid mortgage on it, but cannot afford to pay the difference between the purchase price and the balance of the mortgage, he will assume the first

mortgage and either (1) get a "second mortgage" from a private lenders, or (2) a "purchase money" mortgage which means he borrows the money from the person who owned the house before him (a purchase money mortgage can also be a first mortgage).

Almost all mortgages are obtained from Mutual Savings Banks, Commercial Banks, Insurance Companies, Savings and Loan Associations, mortgage companies, and private sources, the last three being the most common in slum neighborhoods. Private sources charging very high interest rates are just about the only ones willing to grant mortgages in badly deteriorated neighborhoods or for heavily mortgaged buildings.

If a financing institution has reached its legal limit on the amount of its funds tied up in mortgages it will sell mortgages to insurance companies or larger banks with more ready cash. This is known as the "secondary" mortgage market (not to be confused with "second" mortgages). For instance, a large New York bank or a college endowment fund may hold mortgages originated by a bank in a small Ohio town.

Mortgages insured by federal agencies (e.g. FHA and VA) are bought by the Federal National Mortgage Association (FNMA -- called "Fanny Mae"), a government corporation.



Taxes

Local government is largely financed through taxes on real estate (see also p.38). The tax rate is expressed as a certain figure (usually ranging from \$1 to \$6) per \$100 of assessed value of the real estate (land) and improvements (buildings).

In some communities property is assessed at 100% of true market value; in others the assessment represents some fraction of that. For example, if the tax rate in a community were \$4 per \$100 valuation, Mr. Slumlord would have to pay \$400 in real estate taxes a year if his house were assessed at \$10,000.

The tax assessor has considerable potential power because the amount a person pays in taxes will depend heavily on how high his property is assessed. Many slumlords claim that their property will be assessed at a higher figure if they make improvements, thereby increasing their taxes; however, some cities provide tax abatement for rehabilitation.

But slumlords don't always pay their taxes. Each year the city tax collector prepares and publishes in local newspapers a list of tax delinquents. A "tax sale" is then held, where slips of paper representing the tax amount are sold either to the city or to investors who then have a claim on the property.

After a number of years the city or the investor will take over the property for non-payment of taxes (tax foreclosure). The city will either sell it at a public auction (usually to another slumlord) or use it for a public project such as a school, playground, or parking lot.

Speculators interested in quick profit will buy a tenement with a very low downpayment, collect rents for several years without paying taxes or spending very much on maintenance, and then "forefeit" the property to the city, having by then milked substantially more than his initial investment from the dwelling.

How to Do It

Property:

If you have the address of a building and you want to know:

• who owns it? The name of the owner will be listed at least in the tax records; if it is an individual, you're in luck; if it's a corporation and you want to know the individuals involved, check to see:

1. if the corporation has sold any property, because the president or vice president and another officer has to sign the deed in a sale;
2. if the corporation has taken out a mortgage, the same also have to sign;
3. the incorporation papers or corporation annual reports, which might give leads to the real owners.

If all else fails in trying to find who is behind a dummy corporation, try to discover who are the landlord's lawyers. This can usually be done by checking the deed (an attorney may be the witness or the one to whom it gets returned. The incorporation papers are supposed to list the "registered agent" (usually a lawyer).

Right outside the lawyer's office will be a list of many of the corporations he officially represents. Since the real owner probably has other dummy corporations which the same lawyer also represents, checking the officers of the other corporations may give you a lead as to who owns the one you're interested in.

• who holds the mortgage? For what amount is it, and what are the monthly payments? All are found in the mortgage itself.

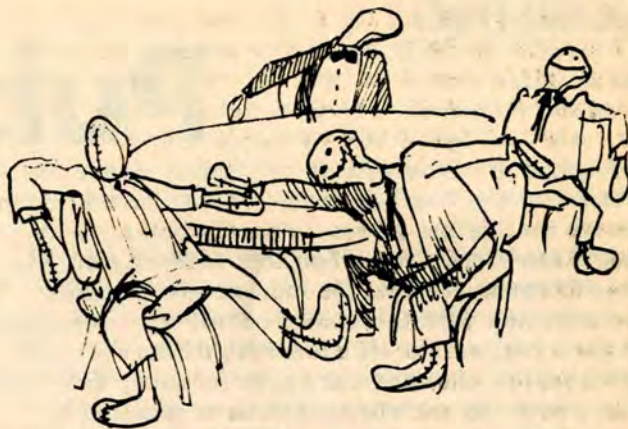
• how much is the property worth? In most cases the current "true value" of a piece of property can just be approximated indirectly. Check the price of similar homes in the neighborhood that have been sold in the past six months. If that doesn't work, check

1. the tax assessment, readjusting if necessary to bring to 100% of true value;
2. revenue stamps at bottom of deed -- the deed does not state the purchase price, but the federal government requires a minimum of \$1.10 of revenue stamps for every \$1,000 of cash value that changed hands. If the buyer takes over a mortgage it's not figured in for computing revenue stamps. These documentary taxes will not be required on transactions after Jan. 1, 1968.

• what taxes are supposed to be paid on the property? Are they paid? Find out the general tax rate and the assessment of the property at the tax collector's office and compute the yearly taxes. Check tax office and newspaper files for lists of delinquent taxpayers and tax foreclosures.

• how exorbitant are the rents? While it's virtually impossible to estimate exactly what a "fair rental" would be, you can discover some of the costs of operating a house:

1. mortgage payments, from the mortgages;
2. tax payments, computed from tax rate and assessment (see above); also see if taxes are paid;
3. water bill: check in the tax assessors office where water bill records are kept;
4. insurance (fire and liability); if you know the market value of the home and the neighborhood, a sympathetic insurance man can tell you the insurance rates (though it's as likely that the landlord can't get insurance at all);
5. maintenance and repairs: usually 5-10% of total rents.



Person:

• what real estate does he own? If he owns it under his own name or his wife's it is relatively easy to find in the tax records or the grantee index, but if he has one or more corporate "fronts" it may be difficult if you don't know the names of his companies. If you know he is associated with a particular building, check to see if he is an officer of the corporation that owns it. Corporations that he buys from and sells to may also offer leads.

• for what reason does he own the property -- speculation, income from rents, or does he live there? If he's owned the building for some time (check date of purchase on deed) there is a pretty good chance that he is not a speculator. Look in city and suburban phone books and city directories to find where he lives (a bit of information that comes in handy if you want to picket his home).

• what are his other connections? See p. 6 for how to find out "who" someone is. In particular, try to discover if he is a member of any established real estate organizations (usually the Real Estate Board) or less respectable slumlord groups (e.g. Property Owners Assn.).

Institution:

• what kind of property does it own or finance? Check mortgages, and deeds. Transactions may be made through a front corporation.

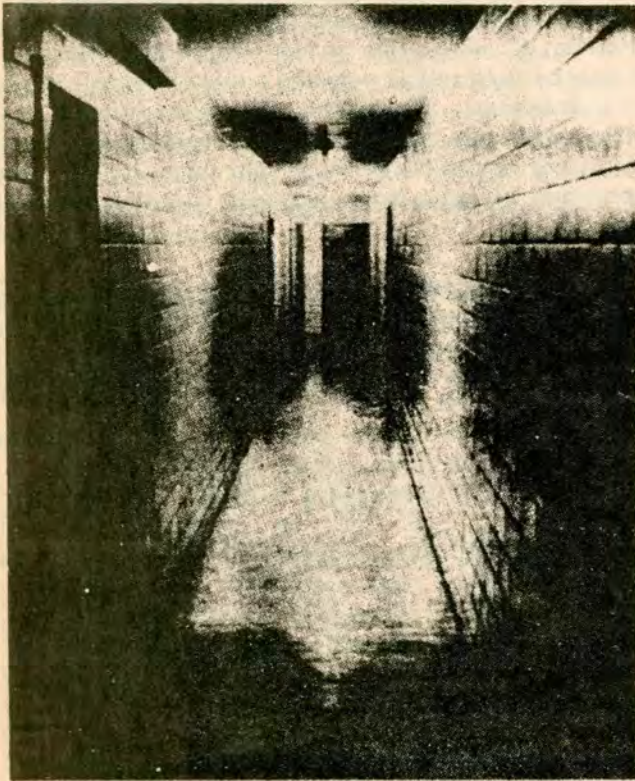
Sometimes financial institutions, such as banks, savings and loan associations, insurance companies and mortgage firms, are intimately involved with slum operations. Endowment funds of well-known universities also have been found to be invested in tenement housing.

• who is on the board of directors? Are they or do they have any connection to slumlords? In the case of large banks and insurance companies, look in Moody's Bank and Finance Manual (in a business library). Officers and board of directors of smaller ones will be listed in state and local business directories; if not, go to their offices and ask them who is on their board, or check their corporation annual reports.

HOUSING

Public Housing

According to the editors of Fortune magazine, public housing has become so unpopular that even private real estate interests hardly bother to attack it any more. But when this federally subsidized housing program for low-income families was initiated with the 1937 Housing Act, pressure from the real estate lobby had its effect. Provisions designed to prevent public housing from competing with the private market have resulted in projects more resembling institutions than residences.



Local housing authorities on a municipal level are given the responsibility of building and managing public housing. The federal subsidy is in the form of annual contributions used to pay off the cost of constructing the projects.

Rents are reasonably low because they are only used to meet operating expenses and payments to the local municipality in place of taxes.

The Housing Assistance Administration, part of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is in charge of administering the program nationally. It used to be called the Public Housing Administration and still commonly goes under that name (PHA).

While in theory local housing authorities are required to comply with PHA regulations in order to receive their annual contribution, the federal government is not in a position to exercise many real sanctions. It cannot threaten to withhold the annual contribution because the "faith of the United States" is pledged to paying off the cost of building the projects (usually in the form of 40-year bonds). In practice the PHA, if willing, can only exert pressure on local authorities by denying approval to new projects, or informally "twisting the local authority's arm".

The Consolidated Annual Contributions Contract and the PHA Management Manual contain PHA regulations with which local authorities "must" comply. Advisory and guidance material is included in Local Housing Authority Management Handbook.

Copies of all three can be found in the national and regional offices of HUD and your local housing authority office. You can write to the national office of HUD for copies of the contributions contract (parts I and II) and the management manual (they're both short) and sections of the management handbook (e.g. Part IV, Leasing and Occupancy, sections 1, 2 and 4).

State laws governing public housing can be found in law libraries. Local regulations and financial records are located ~~but~~ are not very accessible in the main office of the local housing authority, and also are on file with the regional PHA office and maybe the state housing office.

Most, if not all, of these regulations are regarded by housing authorities as "internal procedures", although they are legally supposed to be open to the public. A lawyer or student will have the best chance of seeing or getting a copy of the local regulations. Copies of the lease are relatively easy to obtain, either from the housing authority or a tenant.

Local housing authorities have had considerable latitude in administering the program and in 1959 were given complete responsibility for setting rent and eligibility requirements, subject to PHA approval. Some state enabling laws, however, were not changed along with the relaxation in federal control and still contain the earlier provisions of the federal act.



Getting In...

The only federal requirements governing admission to public housing are that

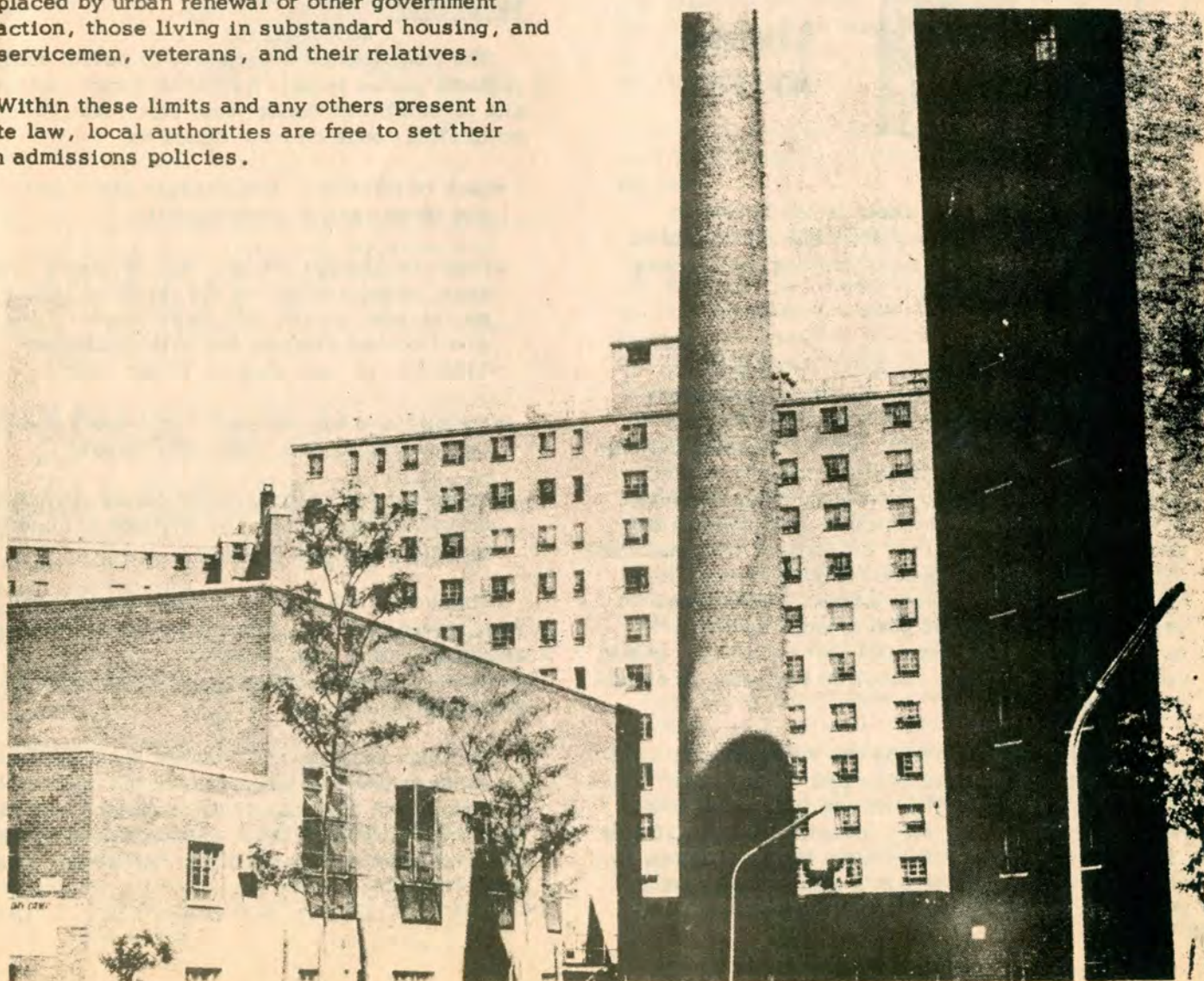
- the tenant's income be within the limits set by the local authority;
- the household consist of a family -- almost all individuals under 65 living alone are not eligible;
- the local authority give preference to those displaced by urban renewal or other government action, those living in substandard housing, and servicemen, veterans, and their relatives.

Within these limits and any others present in state law, local authorities are free to set their own admissions policies.

Local regulations establishing admission policies are required by federal law to be published and posted in a conspicuous place for examination by prospective tenants. More often than not, the regulations are not only unposted, but it is virtually impossible for a tenant to find out what they are.

The PHA Management Manual also states that the local authorities have to make a "determination as to the eligibility or ineligibility of the applicant," but local housing authorities find it easy to evade this regulation by permitting applications to expire. In some cities, where there are long waiting lists, many years may pass without an applicant hearing one way or the other.

In any case, unlike welfare, there is no fair hearing procedure at this time; an applicant can't appeal a decision or the lack of one.



Aside from the residency requirements, the most common -- and controversial -- restrictions governing admission to public housing have to do with "social desirability"

There are very specific standards in some cities used to judge if an applicant is eligible. For instance, the New York Housing Authority's list includes as reasons for potential rejection: "out of wedlock children, obnoxious conduct during processing application, use of narcotics, membership in a violent teenage gang, highly irregular work history, eviction for non-payment of rent, lack of parental control, and poor housekeeping standards including lack of furniture".

Most housing authorities have vague standards or non-written ones, leaving the decision on each application up to the judgment of some administrator.



Living In ...

There are two things about living in public housing that distinguish it from any other kind of housing -- the way the rents are set and the way the project is managed.

Rent:

One of the devices that the real estate lobby managed to get into the 1937 Housing Act was a requirement that a gap of at least 20% exist between the upper rental limits in public housing and the lowest rent for standard private housing available in the community. Although this procedure is not mandatory now, most local authorities still maintain the 20% difference to prevent public housing from competing with the private market. This rental gap pretty much insures that a large number of people will have incomes too high to get into public housing, but not high enough to pay rents in standard housing.

The system originated by the PHA and still used in most areas for determining rent scales is a graded rent system. This means that a tenant's rent is set as a percentage (usually between 20 and 25%) of his income. The project management periodically checks each tenant's income and adjusts the rent accordingly.

This system appears on the surface to be very fair, because people pay only what they can afford. It is bitterly resented by many tenants because

- it is seen as a penalty for increased income -- the rent goes up but the apartment remains the same;
- income which may not form part of the family budget, such as that from a teen-ager's part-time job, or is temporary, such as pre-Christmas employment, may be unjustifiably counted in figuring the rent;
- it encourages concealment of income to avoid rent increases; this in turn makes tenants distrustful of other tenants who might be spying on them.

With the shifting of responsibility for rent-setting to the local authorities in 1959, new systems were introduced. In some areas, a flat rent is set for each apartment, usually based on number of rooms. Experiments are also being conducted using combinations of the graded and flat rent systems.

Management:

The institutional atmosphere of public housing projects comes largely from their strict, arbitrary and paternalistic management practices. Tenant complaints focus on such things as

- lack of privacy -- the manager has a master key and often uses it unnecessarily;
- fees and charges for late rent payments, lost keys, repairs often not the result of tenant negligence, and violations of project rules (the Chicago Housing Authority collected \$100,000 in such charges in one year!)
- prohibitions against pets, over-night guests, certain appliances, and other things;
- tenants given responsibility for maintenance ordinarily handled by the landlord or superintendent in private housing.

These policies also encourage spying and distrust among tenants. Some housing authorities set up their own puppet tenants' associations designed to thwart attempts at independent organization.

Although management policies show more concern for property than for people, housing code violations resulting from poor maintenance are the rule rather than the exception. Slum conditions, including rats, roaches, and no heat and hot water, exist in many projects.

Check to see if the local housing code (p.14) applies to public housing and if the inspectors are especially reluctant to check complaints in public housing.

Two examples of tenant's manuals covering admission, management, and rent policies used by tenant rights organizations are

1. "Rules of the National Capital Housing Authority", available from United Planning Organization, 1100 Vermont Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C.;
2. "Chicago Housing Authority Tenant Manual", (in preparation) to be available from Irv Himmelblau, 1321 W. Taylor, Chicago, Ill. 60607.

Staying In...



Of all the people who move out of public housing every year, some do so voluntarily because they don't like project life; some, an average of only 2% nationally, because of over-income (the only federal requirement for eviction), but many leave against their will.

Leases are purposely drawn up on a month-to-month basis, making it easy to evict a tenant in a short period of time as long as proper notice is given. Although few authorities have formal eviction policies, the same standards of non-desirability used to deny admissions also apply to eviction. The threat of eviction is also used as a weapon against tenant unions.

Except in New York City where a Tenant Review Board exists (though it's only slightly better than nothing), there is no fair hearing procedure for evictions, or for that matter, the setting of rent or imposition of repair charges.

If a few cases that are currently pending in the courts are decided favorably, fair hearings may be instituted for evictions and perhaps even admissions. A recent PHA circular directs local authori-

ties to notify tenants of the reasons for eviction and give them an opportunity to discuss the matter -- so far it's unclear whether this means a "fair hearing" and if it is enforceable. One case decided in federal court has already thrown out an eviction for illegitimacy.

For legal assistance, see p.14. The Project on Social Welfare Law at New York University has available an excellent paper by Michael Rosen called "Tenants' Rights in Public Housing." The NYU Project and the Center on Social Welfare Policy and Law at Columbia (p.14) both offer legal assistance to lawyers handling public housing cases as well as to tenant organizations. For news on recent court decisions see the Welfare Law Bulletin (p.14).

Who Runs the Projects ?

Tenants' groups fighting bad conditions and unfair regulations in public housing inevitably face the question of who has the power to change those conditions and regulations. For instance, when the San Francisco Tenant Issues Council called a city-wide public housing rent strike, one of its key demands was that three tenants be placed on the city's five man Housing Commission. A similar demand has been made by a tenants' group in Washington, D.C.

Things important to find out about who controls your local housing authority and how it works include:

- who are the commissioners and where do they live? (see p.14 for how to find out "who" someone is) How are they appointed and how long do they serve? Minutes of meetings, official correspondence, and financial and other kinds of records of the Commission and the Housing Authority are supposed to be open to public inspection. Attendance at commission meetings and examination of these documents may prove useful.

- who is in charge of the local authority and how is he appointed? Who has the power to hire and fire project managers and other housing authority staff? -- this can be found out directly from the local housing authority. Through informal sources check on the extent to which employment from janitors on up, is a matter of political patronage.

- are there many tenants who, as the result of political pull, gained admission to public housing or are allowed to remain there even though their incomes have passed the maximum limit? Check with tenants and other informal sources.

- what is the relationship between the housing authority and other city agencies, such as welfare and urban renewal? For example, the housing

authority may also be the local urban renewal agency; the welfare department may pay rents of some tenants on public assistance directly to the housing authority. In addition, rents of welfare recipients may be set at maximum levels.

- what are the basic statistical facts about public housing in your city: number of units, apartment sizes, location, age, racial composition and tenant turnover of each project; number of people on waiting list; percentage of total city population living in public housing? Check with the housing authority for this information.

More of the Same?

Despite the unpopularity of public housing, many housing authorities have long waiting lists, sometimes reaching three or four times the total number of units in the community. This does not reflect any great love for public housing, but rather the crucial need for decent low-rent housing.

Between 1960 and 1965 the supply of low-rent units in New York City decreased by 260,000 units according to the city's Housing and Urban Renewal Task Force. With a problem of this size it is clear that the 60,000 units a year authorized for the entire country for the next four years by the 1965 Housing Act will not have much impact.

The 1965 authorization will permit (which doesn't necessarily mean it will actually happen) 15,000 units a year to be bought from existing housing and rehabilitated where necessary; 10,000 units a year can be leased from existing housing for one to three years to meet special needs, particularly those of large families (this is a variation of the rent supplement program, discussed on p.32). The remaining 35,000 units will be new construction.

A brief description of how a public housing project is developed is contained in "Public Housing Fact Sheet" available from the Housing Assistance Administration of HUD. The same agency has published information on senior citizens housing, leased and rehabilitated housing, and other public housing programs.

If your local housing authority plans to start a new project, find out about the following things:

- what will it look like? There's no law that says that public housing has to look ugly. Local authorities say that rigid federal restrictions on the amount of money that may be spent per unit leaves them no choice but to cut costs in any way possible. This is their excuse for unimaginative architecture, the lack of closet doors and toilet seat covers, inadequate refrigerators and stoves, and the absence of other such "frills".

Find out from the local authority how much it will cost to build the new project. Then get a

friendly architect or contractor to estimate how much more some of these "extras" would cost (compared to the total, it won't be very much). He also might estimate how much the cost of acquiring existing housing and rehabilitating it compares with that of new construction. In several demonstration projects, costs per apartment for rehabilitated housing were far below that of new building.

- where will it be located? Check to see if the new project will be convenient to jobs, shopping, transportation and schools. Real estate interests often exert pressure for locating public housing in the least desirable places.

- what will happen to the people living there before? The provisions for relocation of people displaced by public housing projects are the same as those for urban renewal (p.30) and give rise to many of the same problems.

- will it help decrease segregated housing patterns? Check to see if the local housing authority has anything to say about the proposed racial composition of the new project.

A recent amendment to the Management Manual specifies that new public housing must be built outside of areas of racial concentration unless the housing authority can give good reasons why it wishes to do otherwise. In addition, discrimination in public housing is prohibited by the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the President's Executive Order on Equal Opportunity in Housing of 1962.

However, in 1965 at least 60% of all projects were still occupied exclusively by one race. Another 13% had all-white and all-Negro buildings located in the same project area. This pattern of segregation may be changed in part as the result of a new HUD order directing local housing authorities to replace the "free choice" rule governing the selection of tenants with regulations designed to promote desegregation.



Urban Renewal

Story going around Washington these days is that the name of the Demonstration Cities Program was changed to the "Model" Cities Program because too many people thought there had to be a demonstration in a city for it to get federal funds through the program.

In practice this may turn out to be not far from the truth, because many recent demonstrations have been in response to the failures of the urban renewal program -- failures which the Model Cities Program is supposed to remedy.

When people talk about urban renewal they usually mean Title I of the 1949 Housing Act. But the term Urban Renewal is also used to refer to a multitude of housing programs administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Title I provides for federal aid to urban communities for the clearance of slum neighborhoods. A city picks an area for an urban renewal project, declares it blighted, buys the property and tears down the houses. Then the cleared land is sold at a considerable discount (called a "write-down") to a private developer who agrees to build middle-income housing or other projects, such as commercial or industrial establishments, that the city has planned for the area. Low rent public housing can also be built on these sites, but this has seldom been the case.

Later amendments to the Housing Act put more emphasis on conservation and rehabilitation of existing housing, although most renewal projects that have been already started are still clearance ones. Recently issued HUD regulations also put more emphasis on low- and moderate-income housing as opposed to luxury housing and commercial redevelopment.

The federal government pays at least 2/3 of the net project cost -- i.e. the cost of planning the project, relocation, acquisition, demolition and other costs, minus the price paid by the developer for the cleared land. The local government pays 1/3 the cost in the form of cash or capital investments, such as schools, sewers and other public works. Some states contribute up to half of the local share or offer technical assistance to local redevelopment agencies.

The (Un)Workable Program

To receive federal aid for urban renewal, public housing and several other housing programs, a community must have a "sound plan of action to

eliminate and prevent slums and blight, and to foster local development".

This plan is called the Workable Program for Community Improvement and it must be certified each year by HUD on the basis of the original program and an annual "review of progress". You can probably get copies of both the original program and the latest review of progress from the City Planning Commission.

Few communities, of course, actually fulfill all the Workable Program requirements -- except on paper.

The seven requirements are:

1. Codes and Ordinances: Basic housing codes (building, plumbing, electrical, housing and fire prevention) must be enacted, and if in effect, they must be enforced. (Federal aid is available to communities for concentrated code enforcement and demolition of unsafe structures.)
2. Comprehensive Community Plan and
3. Neighborhood Analysis: There are several levels of community planning.

The broadest in scope is the Master Plan, which usually satisfies the comprehensive community plan requirement. It is a projection, usually for 25 years or more, of the development of a city with respect to land use (residential, commercial, and industrial), thoroughfares, community facilities, and public improvements.

There is federal aid available for the development of a Community Renewal Plan (CRP), which is a study of urban renewal action needed on a city-wide basis. It includes an inventory of blighted neighborhoods, a long-range program (10-15 years) for urban renewal, and an assessment of community resources (money, relocation, etc.) available to carry it out. The CRP is often used to meet the neighborhood analysis requirement.

The General Neighborhood Renewal Plan (GNRP), also federally subsidized, covers an area in which one or more urban renewal projects will be started within a period of eight years.

4. Administrative Organization and
5. Financing: The city must show it can administer and finance the workable program. The six-year Capital Improvement Plan is part of this requirement.

6. Housing for Displaced Families: City must "demonstrate" that it can adequately relocate people displaced by clearance, code enforcement, public improvements or other government actions (like highway construction).

7. Citizen participation: City must have an official Citizens' Advisory Committee which "can assist in formulating programs and goals and serving as the medium for bringing private resources into the program". A special subcommittee on minority group housing is required in any community in which not all of the housing is available on a basis of full equality to minority group families.

Urban Renewal for Whom?

Redevelopment is usually supported by an uneasy coalition of big-city politicians, businessmen and reform-minded liberals concerned respectively with getting more votes, more business, and a revitalized city.



It is essential for anyone seeking to stop or change an urban renewal project to understand the nature of this coalition in his city and what individuals, organizations and agencies have the power to make the important decisions.

Urban renewal projects are planned and carried out by a local redevelopment agency, which, depending on state law, may be a separate public agency, a local housing authority, or a department of a city government (federal regulations and pamphlets refer to it as the Local Public Agency - LPA).



Its director is frequently the key figure in any renewal controversy.

Most cities have a City Planning Board which also has to approve each redevelopment project. Find out who are the members of the board of the redevelopment agency and the planning board and to what extent these two bodies act independently of each other.

The official city-wide Citizen's Advisory Committee is virtually an arm of the local redevelopment agency. Find out who is on your local citizens advisory committee, who appointed them, and if and when they hold meetings. Also check to see if there is a special committee on minority group problems.

In some cases, the local development agency, anticipating opposition from a project area, will set up a new neighborhood organization there, or work closely with an existing one to make sure there is "community support" for the project.

How, When, and Where

Even before a redevelopment agency takes any formal steps to start an urban renewal project, hints of the city's intentions for a particular neighborhood may appear in

- the local newspapers;
- documents available from the planning department: Master Plan, Community Renewal Plan, General Neighborhood Renewal Plan and various Feasibility Studies;
- minutes of meetings of the city council, redevelopment agency, planning board, citizens' advisory council.

Tips from sympathetic "insiders" in the planning department or redevelopment agency can also be useful. It's a good idea to keep up to date with all these sources, so you're not taken by surprise

when the announcement of a project is made.

The effectiveness of any opposition to the city's plan will depend on what stage in the course of the redevelopment project (which can take anywhere from 8 to 15 years to complete) the challenge is begun. It will also depend on getting accurate information about the real intentions of the city -- public statements reported in the press sometimes say different things than official documents submitted to the federal government for approval (see

The stages of a renewal project are:

(1) Site Designation:

To be eligible for urban renewal funds, a neighborhood must be a "slum or blighted, deteriorated, or deteriorating" area. To be blighted, HUD specifies, at least 20% of the buildings in the area must contain one of more building deficiencies and there must be at least two "environmental" deficiencies in the area. In addition, there may be a state law specifying the percentage of substandard buildings required.

A general survey of the proposed area is made to demonstrate that it is deteriorated. In most states a public hearing is required at this point, after which the area is officially declared blighted or is officially designated as an urban renewal site. (A short paper on "Fighting the Blight" is available from Stanley Winters, 26 Shanley Ave., Newark, N.J.)

Once an area is slated for redevelopment it deteriorates rapidly. The city makes no effort to enforce the housing code and often cuts down on already meager city services like garbage collection and street cleaning. It takes many years before actual displacement occurs, and in some cases, the city drops or indefinitely postpones its redevelopment plan for the area.

(2) Survey and Planning Application:

The local redevelopment agency, the planning board or a private planning consultant prepares the Survey and Planning Application which includes the survey demonstrating blight, general plans for the proposed area, and estimates of cost of land acquisition, relocation, planning and other project expenses. The process up to this point takes 6 months to a year.

The Application is then submitted to HUD where it is reviewed for 3 to 9 months. The regional office of HUD usually makes an intensive study of the application and then sends it to the national office for final approval. If approved, funds are granted for work on a detailed plan for the area.

(3) Loan and Grant Application--Part I:

This plan, taking one to two years to prepare, includes detailed reports on the extent of deterioration, the urban renewal plan, minority group problems, conservation, land acquisition and sale, relocation, public improvements, financing, and legal matters. HUD then carefully studies the application (6 month to a year) and returns it with preliminary approval and recommendations for any changes.

(4) Public Hearings:

The federal government requires a public hearing before the acquisition of land. Usually the local redevelopment agency, the planning board, and the local governing body (city council) each holds hearings before approving the plan. The hearings, which can take anywhere from a few weeks to several months to complete, give people a chance to express their opinions, but even if all the residents of the proposed site are in opposition to the plan, the city can legally approve it.

If the proposed use of land in the renewal project is different from that indicated in the Master Plan or requires a zoning variance, a public hearing must also be held. Zoning ordinances regulate land use, including the height, size and use of buildings by area. Any exception to the permitted use is called a variance and must be approved by the zoning board which is often the city council.

(5) Loan and Grant Application--Part II:

Evidence of public hearings and approval, revisions of various aspects of the plan, and other factors are included in Part II which is submitted to HUD for final approval. It takes up to six months to prepare and about another 6 months before HUD grants approval and the money to carry through the project.

(6) Project Execution:

If it is a Clearance Project:

(a) acquisition: A price for each building in the project area is set after two independent appraisals. Then the property is bought by the redevelopment agency. It is officially condemned by the city through its powers of eminent domain, which means the city can force an owner to sell if the property is to be used for a public purpose. This is different from condemning a building as "unfit for human habitation" (p.14).

Speculators in slum property are happy to sell to the redevelopment agency since few other buyers are willing to pay cash (rather than making a small

downpayment and taking out a mortgage--see p. 19). Some slumlords, acting on inside information, buy buildings in neighborhoods soon to be designated for renewal, hoping to get a good price from the redevelopment agency.

The federal government also makes temporary loans available to local agencies for the early acquisition of land regardless of the stage of development of the project (i.e. it can be before official approval by city agencies).

(b) relocation: In the relocation reports prepared for the Loan and Grant Application, the city must demonstrate that there will be an adequate supply of housing for displaced individuals and families that is decent, safe and sanitary, "reasonably accessible" to places of employment, and at rents people can afford. The redevelopment agency is supposed to offer assistance to those displaced in finding places to live.

Independent follow-up studies, and even some prepared by the government, show that relocation is seldom, if ever, carried out as required by law. In a housing market where the supply of low-rent housing is decreasing steadily, and open-occupancy laws don't exist or are not enforced, even the most well-intentioned relocation director would have trouble finding the necessary vacant housing particularly when more than half of those people displaced are non-white.

Often people are relocated in substandard housing or in areas soon to be demolished for another urban renewal project. When standard dwellings are found, those displaced almost always end up paying a higher proportion of their incomes for rent, frequently higher than the 25% maximum set by the federal government.

Displaced families are given priority for public housing, but since families displaced by other government action and those living in substandard housing have equal priority, they end up competing for the few vacancies. Many people prefer not to move there anyway.

If a family qualifies for public housing but there is none available it is entitled to payment of up to \$500, equal to the difference between 20% of its income and the new rent for a year.

Payments for moving costs and property loss are made up to \$200 (but averaging less than \$100) for each family or individual householder.

Those people who are "lost" because they move before formal relocation begins receive no compensation for their forced displacement. A city agency manages and collects rents in the buildings slated for clearance while relocation is in progress, which takes anywhere from one to three years.

(c) clearance: The buildings are demolished and public improvements, such as sewers and street lights, are installed.

(d) land sold to sponsors: The "sponsors" of a renewal project (i.e. the developers and financiers) are often informally chosen long before sale (called "disposition") of land takes place. But sometimes the cleared site will lie vacant for several years until the city offers an enticing enough package of tax concessions and other advantages to potential developers.

Before the actual sale certain information must be made public:

- the name of the redeveloper and the names of its officers and principal members, shareholders and investors and other interested parties;
- the redeveloper's estimate of the cost of residential construction or rehabilitation;
- the redeveloper's estimate of rentals and sales prices of buildings on the site.

The redeveloper must also agree to develop the property in conformity with the urban renewal plan. This would mean, for instance, that if the plan specified middle-income housing, the redeveloper could not build a shopping center instead. But on the other hand, he has few restrictions on what the housing will look like. Some cities retain the right to veto all or part of the final design.

The land is supposed to be sold at "fair market value", but the cost to the developer is generally far less than half of what the city has spent to acquire, clear and improve it.

(e) new construction: The FHA insures a long-term, low-interest mortgage providing 90% (and through various financial devices up to 97%) of the total cost of the development. Tax concessions and the substantial write-down of the cost of the land, make it easy for the developer to reap considerable profit with a very small cash outlay.

Mortgages with even more liberal terms are available for cooperative, non-profit and limited-profit developers. For a detailed discussion of how these profits are made, even by so-called "non-profit" companies, see The City is the Frontier by Charles Abrams and The Federal Bulldozer by Martin Anderson (see p. 86 for references).

In addition to knowing something about the developer, it is important to find out who are the other companies connected with the development: e.g. the financier, (sometimes a big company like Metropolitan Life Insurance Co. or Alcoa Aluminum), construction companies, law firms, rental agents, and their possible connection to local politicians.

In the case of non-residential redevelopment, find out the role of the principal party in the deal (e.g. a department store, manufacturer, hospital or university that wants to expand).

If it is a Rehabilitation Project:

The law now states that federal assistance for projects involving demolition and clearance may be provided only where the Secretary of HUD determines that the objective of the urban renewal plan could not be achieved through rehabilitation of the project area.

But even if most of the houses in a renewal area will be rehabilitated, some (usually 20-30%) will be demolished, to be replaced by new residential or commercial construction or parking lots. For sites where demolition occurs, acquisition, relocation, clearance and development take place in much the same manner as with a clearance project.

The local redevelopment agency provides assistance to home owners in finding contractors and financing for rehabilitation repairs. Available, but difficult to get, are low-interest loans to homeowners in renewal and concentrated code-enforcement areas; and for those who have incomes below \$3,000 direct grants of up to \$1,500 per unit.

Federal standards for rehabilitation work are so high, and therefore costly, and these minimal aids do not really prevent rents from increasing beyond the means of people living in the area originally. In effect, rehabilitation acts as a financial bulldozer in clearing a neighborhood of poor people.

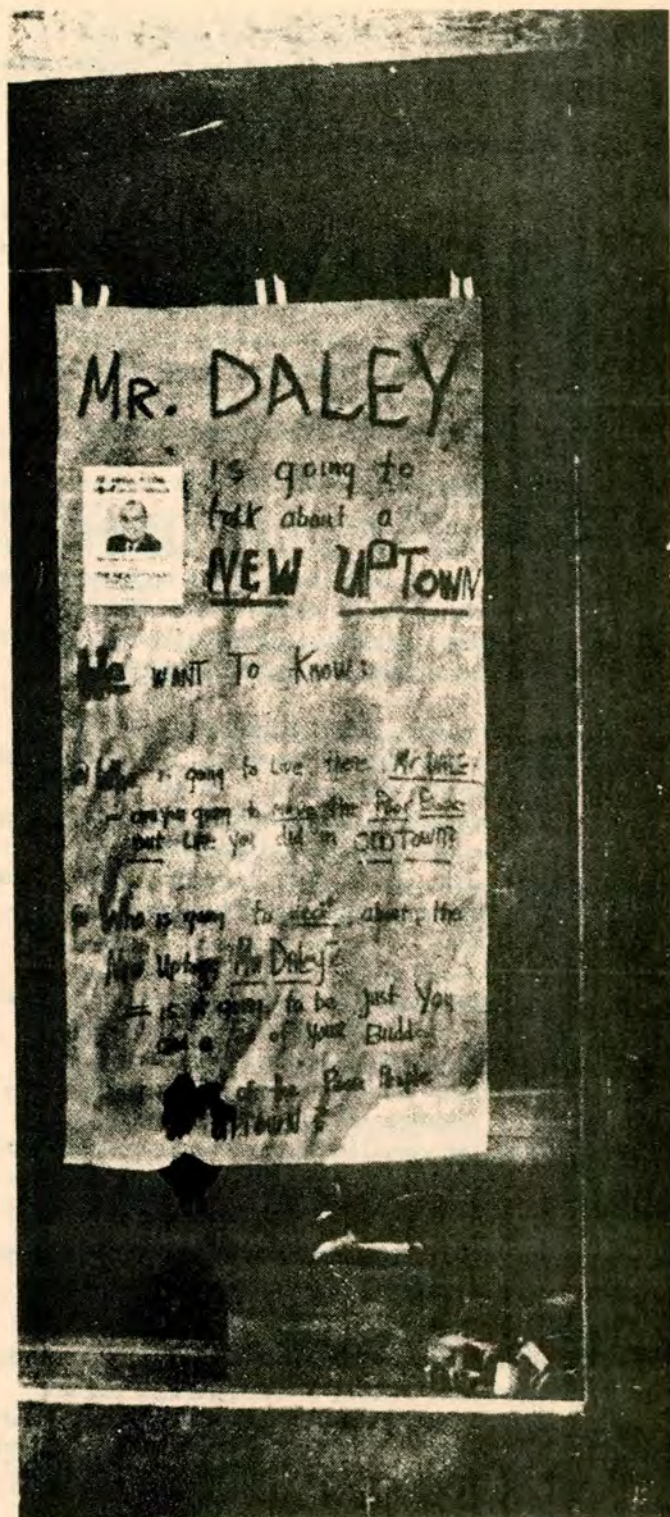
Federal administrative rules and regulations are contained in the three-volume loose-leaf Urban Renewal Manual available for \$22.00 from U.S. Government Printing Office (price includes automatic subscription to supplements and policy revisions). Also check state laws in a law library to see what role the state has in urban renewal and if there are any requirements about holding a blight hearing.

Related Federal Programs

There are three other programs closely related to urban renewal and administered by HUD that are important for community organizers to know about:

'21(d)3 moderate income housing:

Named after section 221(d)3 of the Housing Act, this program provides federally-backed mortgage financing for new and rehabilitated housing in or out of urban renewal areas.



It has two parts. One provides mortgages at "market rate" interest and the other at "below market rate". Sponsors are usually cooperative, non-profit or limited profit corporations (sometimes church groups or labor unions sponsor 221(d)3 projects).

While the below-market program allows for lower rents than the market rate one, they are still too high for low income families. Sponsors are supposed to give priority in admissions to families and elderly individuals displaced by urban renewal and other government action. A few states have their own moderate-income housing programs.

rent supplements:

To receive rent supplements a family or individual must have an income low enough to be eligible for public housing and be either displaced by government action, elderly, physically handicapped or a previous occupant of substandard housing.

The supplements, equal to the difference between the rent and 25% of the family's income, are paid directly to the sponsor (i.e. a private landlord), which must be a cooperative, non-profit, or limited profit corporation receiving 221(d)3 market-rate mortgage financing. Not more than 10% of the rent supplements are authorized for use in below-market housing.

This program is similar to the new leased housing program (p. 26). The main difference is that with rent supplements, the choice of tenants is left to the private landlord, while the local housing authority decides who is to live in leased housing. So far very little money has been appropriated by Congress for the rent supplement program.

Demonstration Cities:

More than just a housing program, demonstration cities (officially called Model Neighborhoods in Demonstration Cities) is designed to induce municipal government to concentrate and coordinate a whole range of federally-assisted housing, social and welfare programs (e.g. urban renewal, Head Start, public health, job retraining) in blighted neighborhoods. The inducement comes from federal grants of up to 80% for planning and developing and administering a project and in addition, grants of up to 80% of the local share of each federal program included in the project.

Money has been appropriated for cities to plan projects during 1967 and 1968. Funds for redevelopment will probably start going in 1968 to 60 or 70 cities selected to participate (out of hundreds of applicants). Guidelines for applicants are

available from HUD; they specify participation of neighborhood residents in the planning stage.

Fighting Urban Renewal

If your group decides that it would like to attack an urban renewal project legally as well as politically, check to see if a lawyer from your local Neighborhood Legal Services office will take the case. The NAACP Legal Defense Fund (p. 57) has already handled some urban renewal cases.

Courts up to now have refused to hear urban renewal cases unless all "administrative remedies have been exhausted (this includes testifying at the public hearing and making a formal complaint to the URA)

Sympathetic city planners and architects can also offer professional assistance in urban renewal.

- Planners for Equal Opportunity, Room 202, 76 Reade St., New York, N.Y. 10007, serves as a clearinghouse for urban renewal fights and other housing issues, publishes a quarterly newsletter, and can put you in touch with friendly planners and architects in your area who work with community groups.
- Local groups include:
- Architects Renewal Committee in Harlem, Inc. (ARCH), 306 Lenox Ave., New York, N.Y., works with neighborhood groups in planning rehabilitation programs and publishes a newsletter.
- Urban Planning Aid, 56 Boylston St., Cambridge, Mass., architects, planners and other professionals working with community groups in Boston area fighting urban renewal and a highway; has available good critiques of relocation and other city programs.
- Community Design Center, write Bob Sasanoff, CDC, University of California Extension, 55 Laguna St., San Francisco, Calif.
- Citizens Council for City Planning (committee on local planning assistance), c/o Seymour Toll, Conshohocken State Rd., Bala Cynwyd, Pa.
- Chicago: group of planners involved with local organizations; contact Bob Gordon, 5457 S. Kenwood, Chicago, Ill, 60615.

Planners and architects often work with community groups in developing alternate urban renewal plans, calling for such things as more low-income housing, "staged" clearance and relocation (i.e. new housing is built on vacant land and people re-

located in it before any demolition occurs), and other specific features that the community may want. They also work with groups sponsoring 221(d)3 projects.

Examples of materials used by two community groups in fighting urban renewal can be obtained from:

- Mission Council on Redevelopment, 2277 Mis-

sion St., San Francisco, Calif. -- newsletter, "El Machete"; critique of city's Survey and Planning Application, and other materials.

- JOIN Community Union, 4533 N. Sheridan Rd., Chicago, Ill. 60640 -- news of urban renewal carried in newsletter, "Firing Line"; also excellent short "textbook" on "Who Wants Urban Renewal" available from Richard Rothstein, 4502 N. Racine, Chicago. Ill.

Check List of Government

Publications:

- Programs of the Department of Housing and Urban Development.
- Summary of the Urban Renewal Program -- incorporating changes resulting from the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Act of 1966.
- Basic Laws and Authorities on Housing and Urban Development: Committee Print of Committee on Banking and Currency, Housing of Representatives, 89th Congress, 1st session, Dec. 27, 1965.
- A Guide for Citizens Advisory Committees for the Workable Program for Community Improvement.
- Rent Supplement Program: HUD Consumer Bulletin.
- Community Renewal Program Policy.
- HUD Notes (mostly public relations newsletter)
- Weekly News Summary and Publications and News Releases (get on mailing list to receive these; they are a good double-check on other sources).

Publications and Documents

Documents:

- Urban Renewal Manual (\$22.00 from Government Printing Office--price includes subscription to revisions).
- Workable Program for Community Improvement and Review of Progress (City Planning Department).
- Survey and Planning Application.
- Loan and Grant Application, Parts I and II
- Progress Reports, Eligibility Surveys and Feasibility Surveys (all from local urban renewal agency or regional office of HUD).
- Master Plan (City Planning Department).
- Community Renewal Plan (City Planning Department).
- General Neighborhood Renewal Plan (City Planning Department).
- Minutes of redevelopment agency, planning board, citizens' advisory committee and city council (from each body).

Government

It's said that "you can't fight city hall."

That may well be true if you think of government as only a big building downtown and the officials who preside there. But you might have half a chance if you have some notion of things that underpin city hall's influence and power:

- the formal and informal structure at all levels of governing bodies, agencies and political parties;
- laws and how they are used;
- money -- where it comes from and where it goes; and
- the role that business and organized crime play in influencing politics.

It helps in gathering information on government and politics to try to remember some things you learned in high school civics -- and forget a lot of other things. For things worth remembering, consult a standard textbook on American city government (see p. 83); use it as a reference in understanding the intricacies of municipal charters, bond issues, taxation, home rule, etc.

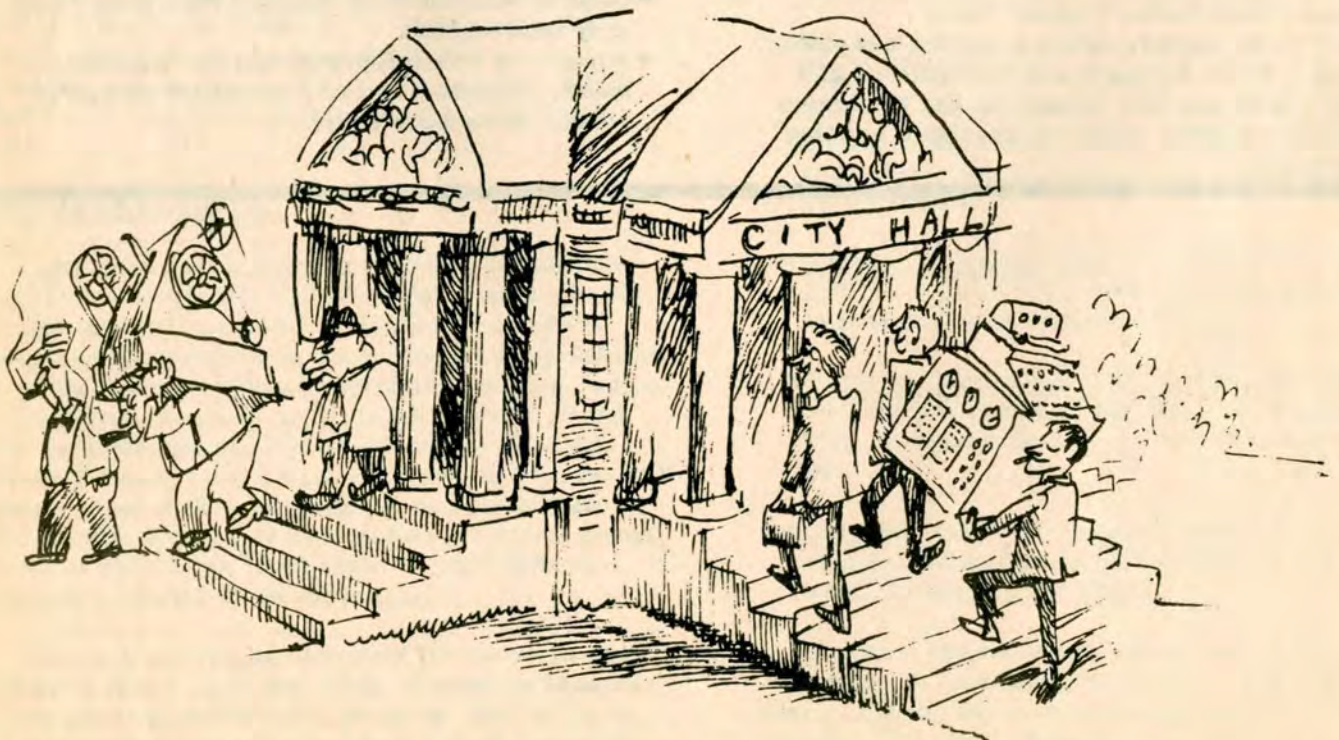
and Politics

But, just because political scientists have heralded the decline and sometimes death of machine-style politics, that doesn't mean that there has been any significant redistribution of power in the direction of the poor.

Patronage may no longer be a major factor, except in a few cities, but bribery, graft, corruption and influence peddling haven't disappeared -- they've just taken on new forms. What has happened essentially, is that old political alliances have been reshuffled to form new coalitions.

General Sources:

- League of Women Voters (LWV): Most local chapters of the LWV publish "Know Your City" booklets which are practically the best descriptions available on the structure and functions of your local government. State LWV's have similar material on state and county government. They also have information and analyses on various legislative issues and up-to-date lists of officials' names and addresses.



passing of machine politics

• Committee on Political Education (COPE) of AFL-CIO: COPE has committees or directors associated with unions on the international, district council and sometimes local level. There is also a COPE office in the national AFL-CIO building, state federations of labor and city-wide Central Labor Councils. Although the quality of material varies considerably, it is a good idea to check the state and city levels for information on legislative voting records and statistics. The legislative committee of the state federation may have some analyses of state legislation. A discussion with local COPE committeemen may even be more useful than the written material.

• Chamber of Commerce: C of C's and private municipal research bureaus with which they are often affiliated maintain ample files and published materials on all aspects of local government. Industrial Development organizations probably do also, particularly tax information for potential investors and developers.

• "Good Government" Groups: Since these organizations hope for the establishment of "good, clean government" they may have documented some of what's so "dirty" about the present scheme of things. One such group, the "Civic Federation" watches the tax structure and evaluates any tax boosts (it usually puts out an annual summary). One caution: "good government" groups are usually preoccupied with the question of structure and believe that by changing it all problems can be solved.

• State League of Municipalities: This group collects and publishes descriptive and statistical data on cities in the state. In addition, the International City Managers' Association in Chicago publishes annually the Municipal Year Book, a compilation of articles and statistics on every phase of city government (includes data on individual cities and is good for making comparisons -- can be found in most libraries).

• Municipal Reference Library: Each city keeps its official records in a small library located in city hall or some other municipal building. Its archives are also there or in a special collection of a local public library.

• Universities and affiliated Research Institutes: Check college libraries in the state (particularly publicly supported ones) for books, reports and doctoral dissertations on government and politics in your city and state.

• State Legislative Manual: Often called "The Blue Book" (but in some states they're red or green) the annual state legislative manual contains information and statistics on every phase of state and county government. It's such a gold mine of information that you might even consider purchasing

a copy of the latest edition, although you can also find one in most libraries.

• newspaper articles and files: Reading all the local newspapers regularly, especially the articles and columns dealing with local politics, is essential. For history and background check newspaper files (p. 7).

• ex-politicians and newspaper reporters: Ex-politicians with an ax to grind may open up with "inside" information not obtainable elsewhere. Getting the same kind of information from sympathetic reporters may also be possible.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR: -government structure, officials & employees

Start off by making a list and, if possible, an organizational chart of the city, county and state elected and appointed offices, their functions, length of tenure and salaries. Then get the names political party affiliations and any other pertinent background on the office holders.

If the LWV or COPE doesn't have this information, try the city charter, a city or state government directory (usually an internal directory for employees listing telephone extensions, office locations, etc.), the state legislative manual, and city and county annual reports (usually describe work of administrative agencies). See p. 6 for how to find out "who" someone is. (A file card system will come in handy in organizing all this information.)

Information on government employees may not be as easy to come by. Check with a lawyer to see if in your state the names and salaries of government employees are a matter of public record and covered by a "right to know law" (see p. 6). People in the community and other informal sources will have a pretty good idea of the extent to which patronage plays a role in hiring.

Find out what is the procedure for getting and keeping a job -- do you have to "know" someone? are there kick-backs? are there civil service exams? who runs the civil service commission? are there any "no-show" jobs? are departments (e.g. sanitation, public works) unionized? (check with the local American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees).

Find out when the city council, county commission and state legislature (and their respective committees) meet. Are all the meetings open to the public or do they sometimes have closed "caucus" sessions? Subscribe to the Proceedings of the City Council, particularly if you can't attend meetings yourself.

-political parties

You can get a good idea of the formal structure of local political parties from the election laws (obtainable from the Secretary of State) and from the party itself -- though not usually .

Then try to find out who fills the various slots: ward leader, committeeman, precinct captains, etc. by:

- going to the ward committee office and asking for a copy (if they have one) of the glossy booklet printed up for annual ward banquets, which will contain a list of precinct captains and ads from affiliated business people, contractors, etc.;
- ask people in neighborhood bars who their local precinct captains are.

Informal sources will be best for discovering who really has power in the party (also be on the look-out for people who hold no formal position), whether or not the minority party is a "captive" of the majority one, and to what extent local precinct and ward committees are "paper" ones.

If local elections are technically non-partisan, find out to which party each "non-partisan" candidate belongs (don't be surprised if they all belong to the same party).

It is almost impossible to get an accurate picture of where political parties and independent candidates get their financial support. The federal government and most states have some sort of "campaign contributions reporting" act, but it usually only applies to donations of more than a certain amount to political parties.

Most contributors get around this by giving to an "independent" "Citizens for Joe Politician"-type committee or donating "in kind" -- i.e. directly paying the bills for printing posters, etc.

If you're interested anyway in checking what's available see:

- Congressional Quarterly for congressional and presidential races;
- State secretary of state and city and county clerks for state and local contests;
- who advertises in program books for testimonial dinners;
- who gets contracts with the city (see budget section below) for more indirect leads to which firms and businessmen are probably contributing to campaigns.

-elections

Election laws are important particularly if you want to get into politics as well as understand it. While writing to the state Secretary of State for a copy of the election laws, also ask for the political calendar listing when and where petitions, forms, etc. have to be filed for particular elections.

The election laws can tell you rules governing the nomination of candidates (primaries, party conventions, independent nominations), procedures for getting on the ballot and eligibility for voting.

Find out who has responsibility for what in placing candidates' names on the ballot and administering the actual election (e.g. secretary of state, county superintendent of elections, county or city election board -- who holds these positions?).

Obtain from secretary of state and city or county board of elections Instructions for Election Day. Try to find out what experience any local insurgent or reform groups (and Americans for Democratic



Action) have had in getting and using election information.

The best places to get election statistics broken down by ward and precinct (also called election district) is the city clerk's office, for local elections, and the county clerk for county, state and congressional elections. The secretary of state, COPE, the legislative manual and other

sources are likely to only have results by city and county (maybe also by ward). Local newspapers may print election results broken down by ward and precinct a day or two after each election.

Make sure to get a ward and precinct map from the city or county clerk.

Aside from finding out the number of people who voted for particular candidates in particular elections, you may also want to compute:

- the extent of ticket-splitting when local, state and national elections occur at the same time;
- the percentage of registered voters who actually cast ballots (the election returns will probably list the number of registrants at the time of election);
- the percentage of people eligible to vote who are registered or voted (you can approximate the potential vote by finding the number of people over 21 from the census -- p. 82).

For various population statistics grouped by congressional district, see the Congressional District Data Book, found in most libraries. If you want to use census or other material to compile a statistical portrait of a ward, assembly district, etc. read the last several chapters of Local Political Surveys by E.E. Schattschneider and Victor Jones, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1962, paperback.

-laws

The city is legally a creature of the state. In the state constitution or statutes are specified certain "Home Rule" powers which are granted to cities -- i.e. areas in which cities are free to make laws about without special approval by the state. But for specific laws not covered by Home Rule powers, cities must obtain enabling legislation from the state.

One Home Rule power -- the "police" power -- is significant because it is stretchable. It gives cities broad authority in protecting the health and safety of residents.

Check with a lawyer or law student to find out which legislative powers the state reserves and which are granted to local areas. (See the discussion of rent control on p. 16 for an example how this information can come in handy).

A lawyer or law student can also help you find state statutes and regulations, and local ordinances and administrative codes.

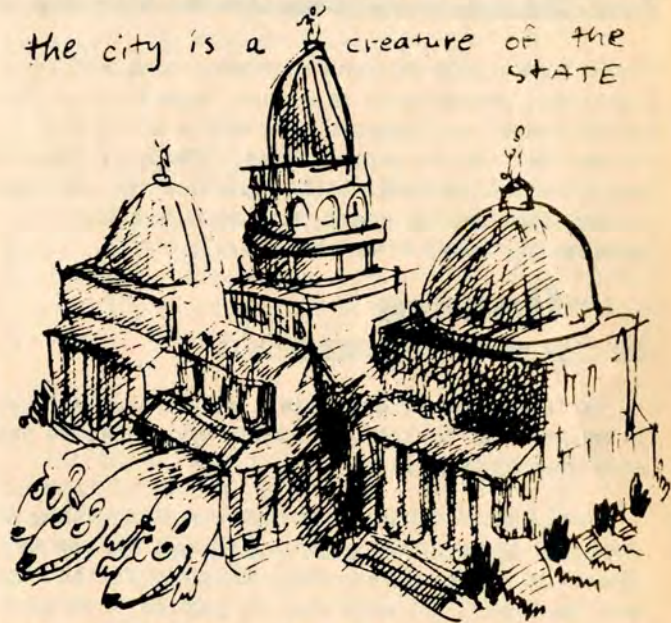
Statutes and ordinances are laws passed by the legislature or city council; regulations and provisions in the administrative code are decided on by administrative bodies and can be changed by them without legislative approval.

If a new law has been proposed and you want a copy your best bet is to ask your legislative representative (assemblyman or senator) or write to the state house. The bi-weekly Legislative Index, which can be found in most libraries, lists by subject all bills currently pending in the legislature and their status (in committee, passed by one house, etc.).

Some things about a proposed law you should check:

- If it is a local ordinance, is state enabling legislation necessary and has it been passed?
- Are public hearings scheduled before the vote is taken? Is so, when and what are the rules governing the hearing; (time-limit on speaking, submitting names of speakers before hearing, etc.)? -- notices of hearings are usually required to be made in the newspapers a specified number of days

the city is a creature of the STATE



before the hearing. If it is an important one, there will probably be a regular article in the newspaper; otherwise it will only appear in small print in the legal notices section (check all local newspapers to be sure).

- Does the bill just pay lip-service to a concept (e.g. regulation of health and safety in housing) or does it mean business? -- A good measure of whether or not there are any teeth in a proposed law is the enforcement section: what are the penalties for violating the law? are there provisions for staffing and funding of an enforcement agency? does enforcement entail a lot of red-tape and delay?

- Which legislators, administrators and private interests are supporting or opposing the bill? -- for instance, you'd be reasonably skeptical of a rent control bill that was supported by real estate interests.

Political Action and Education pamphlets

Organizing:

- Political Strength -- How to Get It, Scholarship, Education and Defense Fund for Racial Equality, 150 Nassau St., New York, N.Y. 10038
- How to Conduct a Registration Campaign, Voter Education Project, Southern Regional Council, Inc., 5 Forsyth St., N.W. Atlanta, Ga. 30303
- Independent Precinct Workers' Handbook, National Conference for a New Politics, 250 West 57th St., New York, N.Y.

Education:

- The Political Machine and • Taxes, JOIN Community Union, both available from Richard Rothstein, 4502 N. Racine, Chicago, Ill.

• Be sure not to confuse authorizations and appropriations, particularly in federal legislation. The authorization indicates the maximum amount of money that can be appropriated. The appropriation, which is in a separate bill, indicates the maximum amount that can be spent (although that doesn't necessarily mean it will be spent).

-finance

How the government gets money:

To finance their activities, municipalities rely principally on taxing real estate and personal property (see also p. 20).

Real estate owners and businessmen with good political connections can usually get the tax assessor to under-assess their property so their taxes will be lower. In addition, properties of certain institutions and non-profit corporations are tax-exempt (e.g. churches usually own a significant amount of such real estate).

Cities supplement property tax revenues with a combination of the following: sales tax (check what's exempt -- food, clothing, drugs?), income tax (how "progressive" is it?), payroll tax (taxes wages of people who work in the city including commuters from the suburbs), and various fees and licenses.

States rely more on sales taxes than do cities, but also collect funds from fees, licenses and excise and income taxes.

Cities and states receive money from two other sources:

- grants-in-aid from the federal government and the state (in the case of cities) -- mostly for welfare, education and highway construction;

- borrowing it by issuing bonds. The interest earned from municipal and state bonds is tax-exempt; consequently they are usually bought by wealthy people eager to reduce their income taxes. State laws and city charters specify ceilings on level of indebtedness.

For information on local and state taxes (as well as a lot on expenditures) check the LWV, anti-tax groups, the local, county and state budgets, the Municipal Yearbook and the Census of Government (in the library). For additional material on bonds, see Moody's Manual of Municipal Bonds, found in most libraries, particularly business ones.

How the government spends money:

There are basically two kinds of budgets: operating and capital.

The operating budget is prepared for each calendar or fiscal year and includes the operating expenses of all government administrative units. A copy of the proposed budget will appear several times in the legal notices of at least one of the local newspapers before formal hearings on the budget; copies should also be available at city hall.

The capital budget lists upcoming expenditures for such capital improvements as sewers, schools, firehouses, etc.; it, too, is approved on an annual basis, but it usually follows fairly closely the Capital Improvement Plan, which is a six-year projection required as part of the Workable Program (p. 27).

Check not only on what money gets spent, but also who receives it. City contracts are on file in the comptroller's office (key contracts to watch for: insurance for city buildings, major construction; also which newspaper carry legal notices).

Organized Crime

Almost all information on organized crime will have to come from informal sources (possible exception: proceedings of hearings investigating crime) such as people in bars, newspaper reporters, lawyers and even the police (if you pose as a student).

To get an idea of things to look for -- e.g. numbers, bookmaking, loan sharking, labor racketeering, more legitimate business fronts, see the books on crime listed on p.

War On Poverty

Sooner or later it becomes clear to people working in, on the fringes of, or against the War on Poverty, that the government isn't seriously going to finance an assault upon itself -- at least not for very long.

Local anti-poverty agencies have either been extensions of the existing political and welfare agency powers-that-be, "liberal" and "enlightened" social engineering projects, or centers of controversy in which poor people, taking the "maximum feasible participation" rhetoric at face value, have challenged a defensive status quo.

Most of the money appropriated to fight poverty has gone into the hands of professionals and politicians, rather than the poor. Most program planning has been from the top down, rather than the bottom up. Of course there are exceptions -- for instance, the Child Development Group of Mississippi -- but these are the short-lived exceptions that prove the rule.

As a result of political pressures, both from the right and the left, the War on Poverty has undergone some changes since it was first begun with the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. There has been some decentralization of authority, new guidelines issued, programs amended here and there, and restrictions placed on the activities of poverty program staff.

These adaptations seem to have forestalled for the present attempts to transfer what programs the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) now administers to other agencies (e.g. Head Start to Office of Education, Job Corps to Labor Department, etc.)

But things are still in a state of flux -- programs may undergo major changes or be phased out completely. Therefore the descriptions of anti-poverty programs which follow are fairly general and should be supplemented by any new amendments to the Economic Opportunity Act or guideline changes.

Programs

After each program is listed the title of the Economic Opportunity Act under which it is authorized and the agency that administers it. For a complete description and guidelines for each program, write to the OEO, Washington, D.C. 20506, or the participating agency.

Community Action Program (IIA, OEO):

CAP is a catch-all program providing funds for

a variety of special projects and the operation of local "umbrella" Community Action Agencies (CAA). The CAA is responsible for developing, approving and supervising the work of its "component" programs. Its governing board, according to guidelines issued in early 1967, is supposed to give one-third of the seats to democratically elected representatives of the poor.

Special programs funded under CAP include: Head Start (p. 66); Legal Services (p. 56); Community Health Centers (p. 44); Consumer Programs (p. 88); Neighborhood Multi-Service Centers: provide referrals to other social services in community and frequently offer such things as day care centers, remedial reading, job and literacy training. Sometimes the organizing of a council which is supposed to represent the neighborhood is done out of such a center.

Other CAP Programs: Upward Bound (education program to encourage high school students from poor families to go on to college); Foster Grandparents (elderly people become substitute parents to children in orphanages and welfare institutions); two rural programs: Assistance to Migrant Families and Indian Reservations.

VISTA (IV, OEO):

A domestic Peace Corps-type program, Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) trains and assigns volunteers to work with various War on Poverty programs, state and local agencies and private social welfare groups.



Neighborhood Youth Corps (IB, Dept. of Labor):

NYC provides work experience for high school students or drop-outs in city or state agencies, hospitals and social service agencies.

Work Experience (V, HEW):

Work experience and training for "unemployed parents with dependent children, and other needy persons" -- usually people on welfare. Run by welfare departments on the local level.

Job Corps (IA, OEO):

Residential centers for unemployed teenagers providing training and work experience. Conservation Job Corps Centers are run by government agencies and urban Job Corps Centers by private corporations -- e.g. Litton Industries, Philco Corp., Federal Electric -- or state universities.

Other Programs:

Adult Basic Education (IIB, Office of Education); Work Study (IC, Office of Education -- part-time jobs for needy college students); Rural Loans (IIIA, Farmers Home Administration, Department of Agriculture); Small Business Loans (IV, Small Business Administration).

On the Local Level

Control of the local poverty program lies in the hands of the governing board of the Community Action Agency. Find out from the local anti-poverty office who serves on the board, who they represent, how they are selected and how much power they have (see p. 6 for how to find out "who" someone is).

Even if you discover that at least one third of the board consists of representatives of the poor, through informal sources check to see if these representatives are affiliated with any special group (e.g. the local political machine).

Find out which anti-poverty programs operate in

your city or nearby (e.g. Job Corps Centers). For each program check:

- who has the contract (Housing Authority, Welfare Department, Probation Department, Police, CAA, the city, a social service agency, private business or industrial corporation, or an independent neighborhood group?)
- how much the contract is for (the federal government contributes up to 90% of total cost; also check who pays local share -- city, other government agency, church, private group?)
- who is on the staff of the program (political appointees, local poor people, out-of-towners, social workers and teachers?)
- if the staff is unionized (AFSCME has been organizing anti-poverty workers in New York City, Washington, D.C. and California)
- what the salaries of various personnel are (are the director, consultants and professional staff paid very well and the poor poorly?)
- what kind of community organizing is being attempted either directly (out of Neighborhood Service Centers, organizing for poverty board elections) or indirectly (e.g. organizing mothers of children in Head Start, organizing rent strikes through a community health center).

Information about programs, staff and salaries is supposed to be public record and obtainable at the local anti-poverty office. Newspaper clippings and informal contacts should also be used.

If your group, interested in obtaining some "seed" money, wants to apply for a grant from the War on Poverty, write to the OEO for their Guidelines for Applicants. Also find out what the current procedure is for getting approval: is approval by the governing board of the local CAA absolutely necessary? Have groups independent of both the War on Poverty and the local powers-that-be ever obtained a grant before? Is the Regional OEO known to be sympathetic to groups like yours?

Community and Public Services

Social Service Agencies

The organizations offering social services in your city will probably be affiliated with a loose federation of similar groups called something like Council of Social Agencies, Community Welfare Council or Health and Welfare Council.

It no doubt publishes a directory listing and describing such agencies as the Salvation Army, Catholic Charities, and organizations which help the retarded, blind, disabled and unwed mothers, offer guidance counselling and place children up for adoption, with foster families and in orphanages.

Closely related to the Council of Social Agencies is its major fund-raising arm -- the United Fund (also called the Community Chest). The board of directors of the United Fund is usually composed of leading industrialists and businessmen.

From the United Fund itself, find out who is on the board of directors, and who serves on the committees and as chairman of the annual fund drives (see p. 6 for how to find out "who" someone is). Also try to find out how much money is collected, from what sources and to which agencies it goes (the fund may put out an annual report containing some of this information).

Of particular concern to community groups will be the availability of day-care centers, nurseries and other pre-school programs (see also Head Start -- p. 66). You will be able to find at least a partial list of existing day-care facilities in the Council of Social Agencies directory.

If you're interested in starting any kind of after-school, pre-school or day-care program, be sure to check state and local laws regulating their establishment and operation. Some states have almost no requirements; others insist that teachers must be experienced and accredited and that physical facilities meet certain health and safety standards.

Recreation

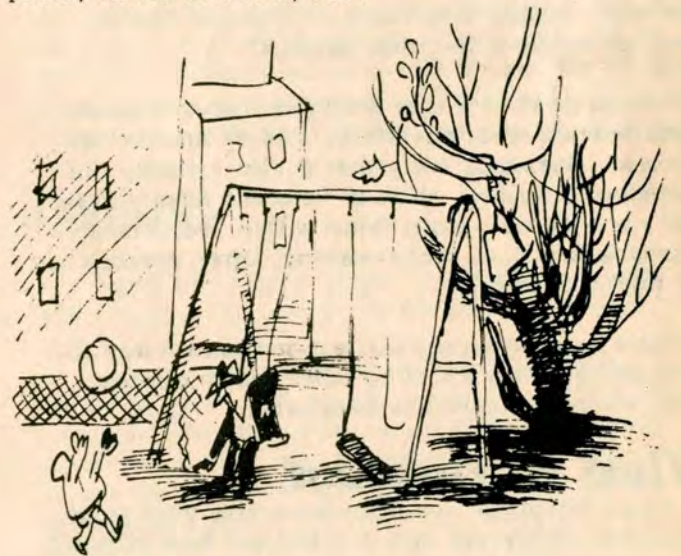
No one has to tell community people that they don't have enough recreational facilities or what kind of facilities they want -- they know already.

The main thing is to find out what the city plans to do about the situation and what places in the neighborhood people think would be good for new parks, playgrounds, swimming pool, indoor recreation center, etc.

For a run-down of existing facilities, check with the Park Department or the Master Plan (p. 27); What hours are facilities open? Are they well maintained? Are schools used?

For type, location and cost of proposed facilities see the Community Renewal Plan, General Neighborhood Renewal Plan, Capital Improvement Plan, Capital Budget or Park Department Budget (pp. 27, 38).

Check private recreation, too: YMCA and YWCA -- do they discriminate? Are their fees too high? Local Social and Athletic Clubs; private swimming pools; movie theaters, etc.



City Services

Garbage collection, street cleaning and street repair:

Find out how often garbage is collected and the streets swept (how many days a week and which days)? How does this compare to other parts of the city? (Check with Department of Sanitation) Is the city slow to repair streets and sidewalks?

Traffic control:

The need for a traffic light or stop sign at a busy intersection can become a big issue in any community -- only in poor neighborhoods you have more difficulty getting results from the city.

Make sure you know exactly who has authority to authorize, finance and install traffic controls (city, county or state-highway department, police department or other), so they can't just pass the buck or make empty promises in response to your demands (in Newark a fight for a traffic light was brought to a stand-still by official buck-passing).

Also check regulations affecting the operation of play-streets: who has the authority to designate a street a play street? What hours is it permitted to operate? Who is in charge of putting up police barricades?



Transportation

Public:

The major issues involving public transportation are its availability and its cost. If public transportation in your city is operated by a private corporation, check Moody's Transportation Manual for who sits on the board of directors and other information about the company. Equally as important is to find out who sits on the state commission

which is supposed to regulate intra-state public transportation.

Under the Mass Transit Act of 1964 the Department of Housing and Urban Development provides seed money for the development of local public transportation systems which are run by or later turned over to private companies.

Private:

Private transportation means cars, cars mean highways, and highways usually mean the displacement of hundreds of poor families who just happen to live in the path of the new road (this can also apply to mass transit -- for example, the new subway in San Francisco).

Keep up to date on proposed plans for major highways (see Master Plan, p. 27; also local, county and state highway maps). Find out who is in charge of building the road (city, county, state, regional authority -- e.g. Port of New York Authority) and from where the funds are coming. (Is it part of the federally-financed interstate system?) People displaced by highway construction are supposed to be compensated for moving (see p. 30)

Write to the Cambridge Civic Association, 1430 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, Mass. 02138, for information on their fight against an eight-lane inner-belt highway scheduled to displace 5% of the city's population; in particular ask for VI Speak which contains interviews with six families whose homes lie in the path of the proposed expressway.

Utilities

Charges and overcharges for telephone, gas and electric service are problems for everyone.

But a big headache for low-income families is scraping up enough money to make a deposit, particularly when deposits required in poor neighborhoods are higher than elsewhere. Another problem is the reluctance of utility companies to investigate complaints of mistaken overcharges in poor communities. Find out if this is true in your area. See Moody's Public Utilities Manual for information on the gas and electric company in your city. Also check who's on the board of the state Public Utilities Commission.

Health

"If you don't put your sweater on when you go out, you're going to get sick and have to go to Lincoln Hospital," a mother in the southeast Bronx warned her daughter recently. Other hospitals serving poor people across the country are viewed with a similar sense of horror.

Despite this reputation, the problem of health care is not usually seen as an issue by poor people, but rather as just one complaint among many. Nevertheless, it can turn into an issue, and quite an explosive one at that, as when the closing of St. Francis Hospital in New York resulted in long and loud protests from the community.

It has been often noted that "the poor get sicker and the sick get poorer."

This is the inevitable result of a chain of circumstances. The medical facilities offering care to "charity patients" are generally inadequate, uninviting and inconvenient; the cost of private care is too high. Consequently, poor people, as well as others, put off seeing a doctor or going to the hospital until it's absolutely necessary. This means they receive little in the way of preventive care (i.e. regular check-ups so disease can be detected before it becomes serious).

The medical care that people do receive comes from three sources: hospitals, clinics and private doctors. Hospitals are either public (usually run by the city, county, state or Veterans Administration), private non-profit (also called "voluntary") or proprietary (i.e. profit-making, often established and run by doctors).

There are emergency and out-patient clinics located in hospitals and also other health clinics which are not attached to hospitals.

What to Find Out

- Which hospitals and clinics service your neighborhood? Where are they located and how difficult is it to reach them by public transportation? Are they accredited? What kind are they (public, voluntary or proprietary)? Who sits on their governing boards and who are their administrators? (see p. for how to find out "who" someone is) How are they financed (from government funds, fees, endowments, contributions)? Is discrimination in any form practiced? (particularly if the facility receives federal funds under the Hill-Burton program -- see "Equal Opportunity in Hospitals and Health Facilities: Civil Rights Policies Under the Hill-Burton Program" available from U.S. Commission on Civil Rights).

- What kinds of services do clinics offer (emergency, out-patient, well-baby, sick-baby, pre-natal, dental, etc.)? Are the clinics either overcrowded or under-utilized? What hours are clinics open? (at night? on weekend?) How long does a patient have to wait to receive care (particularly in the emergency clinics)? What fees, if any, are charged? Who pays the fees -- the patient, the welfare department, medicaid, hospital insurance? Is medicine offered free or at cost?

- How many beds are in each hospital -- how many in wards and private rooms? What special facilities and departments does each hospital have?

- What percentage of the hospital staff is foreign (and have trouble speaking or understanding English)? In areas with a large Spanish-speaking population, does any of the professional staff speak Spanish? Are any of the employees unionized -- maintenance, kitchen, orderlies, nurses' aides, nurses, etc.? What union? Are there many staff vacancies? Did many workers in public hospitals and clinics get their jobs as the result of patronage? What is the attitude of the professional staff toward poor people?

- How do public health statistics for residents of your neighborhood compare with the rest of the city, metropolitan area and nation? (TB, infant mortality and VD are supposed to be the most significant rates in demonstrating lack of adequate medical care).

- Are private doctors available at night, on weekends and on "days-off" (sometimes almost all the doctors in an area take the same weekday off)? Will they make house calls? Which doctors and dentists in the area will accept welfare recipients as patients? Are there any unlicensed "doctors" fraudulently operating in the neighborhood? What do women in the community seeking abortions do -- use regular doctors, other abortionists, or home remedies? Are there many instances of malpractice (e.g. tying tubes, unnecessary operation or tooth-pulling) or poor practice (e.g. skimpy examinations and check-ups, anesthesia not used when it should be). What is the local Medical Society like?

- What are conditions like in hospitals and clinics? (rats, roaches, building violations: see p. for information on the housing code; is decent food served?) Try collecting and documenting the "horror stories" told by community people about hospital conditions and medical butchery.



The Sources

● city and state departments of health: they're likely to have public health statistics and information on city and state-run clinics and hospitals. For such information on a national level, write to the Surgeon General, Public Health Service, Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

● hospitals: individual hospitals issue annual reports, but they're not always easy to obtain. Best bet is to get a student or someone posing as a student to interview the hospital administrator, who is also a good source of data, and ask for a copy of the report (for public hospitals see above).

● unions: trade unions which represent hospital workers have amassed considerable information on hospitals and clinics they have already organized or want to organize. Getting it may be difficult, but if you have an "in" with such a union, use it. For public hospitals contact the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees; unions organizing voluntary and proprietary hospitals vary from city to city -- usually locals of unions established in other fields (e.g. Teamsters, Local 1199 of District 5 of Retail, Wholesale, Department Store Workers Union). Hospital workers themselves can tell you much about conditions in the hospitals.

● work in a hospital or clinic yourself: hospitals are so understaffed that it would be fairly easy to get a job as an orderly or nurse's aid for a short time; there are also opportunities for voluntary employment. Whether paying or not, a brief job can tell you more than almost any other source of information.

● hospital council: if your city is large enough there might be an association of hospitals (perhaps of just the private ones) which publishes statistical and descriptive information. If not, try the

United Fund or Council of Social Agencies (p. 41).

● people in the community: a formal or informal survey of neighborhood residents will give you a good idea of what health services are used (as opposed to what's available). "Health Services in Cooper Square" (available from Walter Thabit, 76 Reade St., New York, N.Y. 10007) is a good example of the kind of survey that can be done of where local people get medical care, how they feel about it, and the institutions offering it. It includes a more detailed listing of what information to get.

Community Health Centers

In an attempt to cure some of the ills which handicap the medical establishment in treating poor people, independent groups and the War on Poverty have opened community health centers designed to reorganize and improve the delivery of medical care and give the community some control in the running of the centers.

In general, the OEO-financed centers have been fairly successful in changing the delivery of health services for the better but haven't achieved much meaningful community control; on the other hand, independent groups, operating with volunteer professional help and scant resources, provide minimal services but have been able to involve the community more, largely because these centers grew out of multi-issue community movements (e.g. National Farm Workers in Delano, Calif.; freedom movement in Alabama).

For an overview of independent and OEO health centers as well as a good discussion of the relationship of health issues to community organizing, see "The Community Health Center" by Peter Rothstein, available from him at Box 277, Albert Ein-

stein College of Medicine, Eastchester Rd. and Morris Pk. Ave., Bronx, N.Y. 10461 (it will probably be revised and up-dated during the summer of 1967).

For information on independent community health centers, contact:

- **Student Health Organization:** Members of the SHO, which is a loose federation of local medical student groups, help set up and staff community health centers and aid community organizations in other health matters during the school year and in special summer projects. Regional contacts are: Paul Epstein, Albert Einstein School of Medicine, Eastchester Rd. and Morris Pk. Ave., Bronx, N.Y. 10461; Fitzhugh Mullen, University of Chicago Medical School, Chicago, Ill.; Peter Schnall, Stanford University School of Medicine, Palo Alto, Calif.

- **Medical Committee for Human Rights:** Formed in the early years of the civil rights movement, the "med committee" now concerns itself with health problems of poor people as well as Negroes. It operates several health centers in Alabama; chapters (there are about 15 nationally) investigate conditions in local hospitals, help with community health centers and in some cases push for abortion-law reform and increased birth control education. Contacts are: Quenten Young, 1512 E. 55th St., Chicago, Ill. 60615; George Wilson, 1520 Naudain St., Philadelphia, Pa.

On OEO-funded projects:

- "Of the Poor, by the Poor, or for the Poor?", a short paper discussing the Tufts Medical School health center at Columbia Point public housing project in Boston, and community health centers in general; by H. Jack Geiger, M.D.; available from Department of Preventive Medicine, Tufts University School of Medicine, 25 Bennet St., Boston, Mass. 02111.

Medicare & Medicaid

Organized medicine and insurance interests waged war for more than 20 years against the introduction of expanded medical care for the aged and medically needy.

But the apparent defeat suffered by the medical establishment when the 1965 amendments to the Social Security Act were enacted, may be changing into long-run victory. Doctors and hospitals have hiked fees with the promise of government reimbursement, and insurance companies have been guaranteed a slice of the Medicare pie.

Medicare:

Like Social Security, Medicare is an insurance program run directly by the federal government. The payment of social security taxes and voluntary

contributions entitle people over 65 as a matter of right to financial assistance in paying medical bills. You can get more information on the program from the local social security office.

Most of the billing is handled through private "fiscal intermediaries", which usually are large insurance companies. Find out from the local social security office or the national Social Security Administration in Baltimore who the intermediary is in your area; see p. 70 for how to find out more on the company.

Medicaid:

Medical Assistance, usually called Medicaid or Aid to the Medically Indigent (AMI), is a federal-state program authorized by Title XIX of the Social Security Act and is run on the local level by welfare departments. It provides for the gradual expansion of medical services offered and number of people covered, with the goal of comprehensive medical care for all people who can't afford it by 1975 (potentially more than 35 million people).

Initially (by 1970), Medicaid need only include recipients of categorical assistance (see p. 47). But there are also federal funds now available to states for including (1) comparable groups of medically needy people -- the aged, blind, and disabled and families with dependent children -- who have enough income for daily living but not for medical expenses, and who, except for income, would meet their state's eligibility requirements for public assistance; (2) all children under age 21 whose parents (even if they are employed) cannot afford to pay medical bills.

In order to qualify for federal funds after 1975, states must be providing Medicaid to all who are medically needy -- whether recipients of public assistance or not. There are several catches to the program:

- the definition of "medical need" is made by



each state (from very limited to very liberal -- for example, in New York a family of four with an income of \$6,000 after taxes is eligible);

- the recipient of medical assistance can go to a private doctor, but many doctors have refused to cooperate with the Medicaid program.
- while some eligibility requirements (e.g. residence) and application procedures are less strict than with welfare, Medicaid still involves a "means" test.

Write to the Bureau of Family Services, Welfare Administration, Department of HEW (Washington or regional offices) for a detailed description of the program. Check with your state and local welfare departments to find out how extensive the current Medicaid program is and what changes are planned for the future.

Generally good sources of information on Medicare, Medicaid and private health insurance plans are trade union benefit plans and trade union retired members groups.

Mental Illness

Many people who are mentally disturbed -- and some who aren't -- are "put away" in institutions and hospitals. Nearly all mental hospitals are public, usually run by states and sometimes counties. In addition, many regular hospitals have psychiatric wards.

Since people locked up in these institutions are obviously not in the community, the organizer will have no direct contact with them; however, he is likely to run into ex-inmates, and friends and relatives of people presently "away".

Find out what hospitals for the mentally disturbed and any other psychiatric services exist in your area (state and local mental health associations probably have this information). Then check basically the same things for these facilities as you would for regular hospitals and clinics (conditions, staffing, financing, discrimination, adequacy of care, etc.) plus commitment and release procedures.

Also try to get a sense from sympathetic lawyers about whether judges are particularly prone to sentencing defendants to prisons and hospitals for the "criminally insane". See Welfare Law Bulletin (p. 30) for case comments on civil liberties and mental illness.

Welfare

It was not long after America rediscovered poverty a few years ago that welfare recipients, living in what has been called "guaranteed poverty", started organizing to demand their rights.



The mushrooming movement that resulted has forced officials, the public at large and welfare recipients themselves to take a second look at the way the public assistance system works in this country.

What is usually called "welfare" is actually two different programs. One is financed in part by the federal government -- it covers special categories of people (therefore called categorical assistance), such as the aged, blind, disabled or families with dependent children. It is run by the state, frequently through county welfare boards.

The other, General Assistance, is commonly a state program run by each city or county, and a catch-all for people in need who don't fit into the categories or are on welfare for a very short period of time.

Compared with categorical assistance, the general assistance program (also called "general

relief" and "home relief") guarantees fewer rights, on the average makes lower payments, and doesn't even exist in several states.

Categorical Assistance

The vast majority of people on welfare receive money under one of the categorical programs, which are authorized by the Social Security Act. They include:

- Old-Age Assistance (OAA): for people over 65. These are grants and should not be confused with what is generally known as "social security", which is Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance (OASDI), and more recently includes Medicare (see p. 45). OAA is for the elderly who don't receive Social Security or don't receive enough of it to live on.

- Medical Assistance for the Aged (MAA): for people over 65 who don't receive OAA, but who cannot afford necessary medical services.

- Medical Assistance (MA, Medicaid or Aid to the Medically Indigent-AMI): for all recipients of public assistance and other people who are defined as medically needy (see p. 45). When this program is established in a state it replaces MAA and other forms of medical aid going to welfare recipients and is usually adopted just for that purpose rather than offering aid to a broad range of people.

- Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC or ADC): for families with children under 18 (under 21, if still in school in most states) where one parent is partially or totally disabled or not in the home (parent may be separated, divorced, unmarried, in jail, in a hospital or institution, or dead). Children must be living with parent or specified relative. Also in many states, under temporary legislation, both parents may be present in the home with one parent partially or completely unemployed (ADC-U or ADC-UP).

- Aid to the Permanently and Totally Disabled (APTD or AD): for people who are unemployable because of a disability.

- Program combining OAA, AB, APTD and MAA called Aid to the Aged, Blind, or Disabled (AABD). States can choose to take joint plan or each one separately.

In order to receive grants from the federal government for categorical programs, each state must adopt a State Plan. This plan, to be approved, must show that it is in accordance with federal requirements.