

## Task force probes penal treatment of poor

The Commission for Racial Justice has been concerned about the injustices and inequities of the criminal justice and penal system for several years. We have noted with anguish that the courts and prisons of this country are populated with Blacks, minorities and the poor. We are also quite aware that there is a systematic campaign to imprison Black activists as they seek to bring about some meaningful change in the lives of Black and minority people. Angela Davis, Rev. Charles Koen of Cairo, Illinois are just two examples of this.

The concerns about the criminal justice and penal system and the recent unexplained death of George Jackson and the Attica 43 prompted the Commission for Racial Justice to call for the creation of a Black Investigation Task Force to look into the conditions of prisons and the treatment of prisoners.

The conflicting explanations of the death of George Jackson and the attempt by New York State prison officials to misinform the public about the Attica tragedy reaffirm to us that the only way Blacks will receive the truth about these incidents is to do our own

investigation. More important, however, is the formulation of a "Black agenda" to deal with the injustices of the entire criminal justice and penal system.

The Black Investigation Task Force is composed of Blacks from various philosophical, religious, political, economic and educational backgrounds. This diversity reflects various trends of thought within the Black community but affirms our desire to do something about problems that confront Black and minority people however different they may be individually.

The Task Force represents the desire and the will to do something about our Brothers and Sisters presently incarcerated and those who will meet the wrath of a sick and racist society in the future. Groups represented in the Task Force include congressional and state political figures, the Congressional Black Caucus, National Conference of Black Lawyers, the National Bar Association, Congress of African Peoples, Urban League, Ohio Black Minister's Conference, Disciples of Christ, Institute of

the Black World, Howard University, Malcolm X Liberation Univ., in Greensboro, N.C., Commission for Racial Justice and others.

The Task Force activities will focus in several areas of concern. The areas are: Investigation, Legislative, Legal Confrontation, Public Relations and Education, Community Organization and Mobilization, Research and Finance.

The staff co-ordinator of the Task Force is Irv Joyner of the Commission for Racial Justice staff. At this point the Task Force is seeking to contact as many groups and individuals as possible that are working on the ills of the criminal justice and penal system. We are also quite interested in correspondence with inmates who can document the conditions of prisons and the treatment they receive. Both of the foregoing are quite important as we seek to develop a Black agenda for ourselves. All information and correspondence should be mailed to: Irv Joyner, Commission for Racial Justice, 287 Park Ave. South, New York, N.Y. 10010.

## Hawkins hits Nixon "Workfare"

Congressman Gus Hawkins accused President Nixon of "doubletalk" and irresponsible action regarding his recent stand on welfare recipients.

He challenged the administration to produce some real jobs for people who are willing to work instead of attacking persons unable to find employment.

Nixon justified the "workfare" provision in the new Social Security Act which cuts out welfare recipients who re-

fuse to accept any type of employment. Nixon said work is "preferable to life on the public dole".

Hawkins said, "It ill-behoves the President to talk about the dignity of work when he has deliberately deprived over 2 million Americans of jobs since 1969. Apparently his definition of work ethic is slave labor, not real jobs that enable individuals to feed and clothe and shelter themselves."

"This Congress has passed an employment program, that

the President vetoed, which would have provided meaningful jobs."

He explained, "There are now pending other bills which would create at least 500,000 public service jobs which could be filled in 90 days if Mr. Nixon really believes in 'work-ethic' and wants to abolish the so-called 'free-loaders on welfare'."

Hawkins attacked the Nixon policy declaring that "his administration does not intend to create jobs in the public sector. The President intends to rely on some mysterious, unnamed sources in the private sector to deliver the jobs of his new economic policy."

"At best the delivery date is three years away and depends on fat government contracts out of which big profits must be scooped off the top."

Hawkins accused the President of making racism in his statements. "The hardest hit are black women and youth whose unemployment rates under the administration have soared as much as 40% in the inner cities. These are the worst-offended victims of the new policies. They seek opportunities, not dole payments disguised as workfare."

## Ombudsman solves problems



Ezra Parrott

Berkeley, California, has a new ombudsman, one of the few in the nation. Ezra Parrott is the middle-man between the city and Berkeley residents. He is responsible for re-

ceiving citizen complaints, investigating them by contacting various departments and working out some sort of solution.

Since November Parrott has handled 75 complaints, resolving most of them to everyone's satisfaction. "I must rely on the good faith and cooperation of city departments to find out what the particular problem is. But that doesn't mean I take the word of a city official over that of a private citizen," he said.

"If, however, the official is right, I can add credibility to what he says."

Ezra Parrott, 41, is a 20 year Air Force veteran. He recently earned a B.A. in philosophy and psychology from the University of California at Berkeley.

The problems he deals with cover a broad range from requests for assistance, landlord-tenant disputes, and complaints about police treatment and city hiring practices.

## Nixon accused of POW politics

Senator George McGovern (Dem - S.D.) and Representative Robert Leggett (Dem - Calif.), both of whom have talked to the North Vietnamese in Paris, charged President Nixon with deceiving the American people on the issue of the prisoners of war being held by North Vietnam.

McGovern told a news conference that the North Vietnamese government will exchange the POW's for a deadline for U.S. troop withdrawal. He revealed that he had recently called the North Vietnam delegation in Paris to verify that their offer still stands.

Rep. Leggett called Nixon's remarks on a television interview, January 2nd, contained "a fantastic reversal of the truth." When asked about the trade, Nixon said when the

question was "floated out this fall, the North Vietnamese totally rejected it."

"Far from rejecting this trade," Leggett said, "the other side has explicitly offered to do it. They offered it to me in private on May 31 of last year, and again at the official negotiating table on July 1."

When he was asked if the United States had ever asked the North Vietnamese if they would agree to a trade, President Nixon said, "That particular matter has been under discussion at various times in the Paris peace talks."

Leggett said, "Mr. Nixon's response was incredible" and was intended to give the impression that the question had been asked when it had not. "I repeat, it has not been asked," he said.

## Do you know any 12 year old junkies

This year a survey by the Addicts Rehabilitation Center found there were 40,000 addicts in Harlem. That's about one out of every six people.

Walk along nearly any street uptown and you'll see Harlem's great addict army -- slumped over in doorways, stumbling along in a trance, nodding in front of bars and soul food joints, standing in the cold without enough clothes on. Chances are you'll also see other all too familiar Harlem scenes: the dope pusher who sets up shop on a street corner and deals like he had a license; the junkie couple who have established residence in an abandoned building and are playing man and wife; the teenager who is wearing \$100 alligator shoes and a \$300 silk suit.

The streets of Harlem used to serve the same purpose as the cafes in Europe. The sidewalks would swing with men smiling and rapping with each other and everywhere you'd go there would be crowds, noise and laughter.

But it's not quite so anymore. Fear now pervades Harlem. The derelict horde menaces our streets and parks, lurks outside our homes and stores, and preys on neighbors and friends. Whole neighborhoods have declined; others have been completely abandoned to junkie

squatters. Heroin has destroyed the functioning of our school system. Eight-year olds experiment with heroin bought in the grade school yard and in Benjamin Franklin High School, where drugs are as available as chewing gum, young girls shoot up in the locker room and 13-year olds buy dope from 15-year old peddlers.

But most devastating of all is the effect heroin has had on our young -- the hope of the Black nation. It used to be that a mother would pray that her son would finish high school. Now, she dare not admit to herself her worst fears: that her son's corpse will be found on some rooftop, a needle sticking from his arm. Personally know of a mother who has four sons, all of them addicts, and such a situation is not unique.

The sad fact is that junk is so readily available in Harlem that any kid with some curiosity and some small change is bound to try it. One of the most demoralizing experiences I ever had in Harlem was being panhandled by a 12-year old junkie.

Meanwhile, back at the Establishment, the state has slashed funds for narcotic programs by 65 per cent and reduced the number of addicts who can be treated in residen-

tial centers from 6,435 to 2,167. The pharmaceutical companies won't invest large funds to develop a nonaddictive heroin substitute since there's no profit in it for them. Despite much heralded pledges of intragovernmental cooperation to halt the international drug traffic, not a single heroin laboratory has been busted in France in two years, opium is still being grown on a vast scale in Turkey, and the amount of heroin smuggled into the United States from Southeast Asia is up sharply.

The people of Harlem may or may not know of these developments, but they do see the cops of Harlem; cops who are quite willing to defend the Republic against permissiveness and long hair, but look the other way when a heroin sale is being transacted. Cops who proudly wear the American flag, but accept payoffs to make a heroin bust and then resell what they've confiscated, and cops in patrol cars, with the windows rolled up and the doors locked, who don't even bother to glance at the pushers taking care of business on the sidewalks.

That's the way it is in Harlem. The situation never changes except that more and more of the young are shouting, "Genocide!"

## Goldschmidt pledges commitment to pollution standards

In Section 2 of your Clean Air Act Implementation Plan you state that "It is the intent of the Department to explore with the City" several alternatives and "obtain a commitment from the City, by no later than September 1, 1972, to implement a specific program sufficient to meet ambient air standards by 1975."

I pledge to do everything possible to see that you have that commitment from the City to a specific program that is sufficient to meet ambient air standards by 1975. Some people may say that your projections show that you will meet ambient air standards in the city of Portland by 1980, with an inspection program but without any other efforts, so why should we make any other efforts at all?

I believe there are several good answers to that question. First, it is important to note that, according to your standards we must make reductions. To me, that means that our air needs improvement now. My child and other children of this city are breathing the air now, and they will be breathing it between now and 1980. What is the cost to our children, in terms of their future health, of breathing this air?

One of the pollutants you say we must reduce is carbon monoxide, which is a dangerously heavy level in downtown Portland on many days. Carbon monoxide is dangerous because it slows down the delivery of oxygen to body tissues, as everyone knows.

It is also dangerous because it is completely invisible. I would like to read to you part of a widely-quoted 1969 article by Nicholas Gage, written in the Wall Street Journal. Mr. Gage says, "During daytime hours when traffic is heaviest, the carbon monoxide level in Manhattan often soars to between 25 and 30 parts per million, having an impact on the lungs equivalent to that of two packs of cigarettes a day." (And here I would like to parenthetically note that Portland carbon monoxide, periodically, is this high in certain locations.) Mr. Gage goes on to say that, "According to medical studies, exposure to carbon monoxide, even for short periods can cause headaches, nausea and dizziness. After 90 minutes of exposure to only 50 ppm., the ability to make certain visual discriminations and time judgments is impaired - indicating that high carbon monoxide levels on streets and highways may be a factor in traffic accidents. Even exposure to levels as low as 15 ppm. may have an effect on mental and sensory responses, researchers say."

Another pollutant that you say must be reduced, and that our children are breathing now, is nitrogen oxides. Researchers at UCLA have learned that nitrogen oxides reduce the oxygen-carrying capacity of laboratory animals' blood by up to 38%, and can also induce inflammation of the respiratory tract in laboratory animals. Higher doses can restrict breathing.

And, you add, of course, that we must reduce hydrocarbons which combine with nitrogen oxides to form ozone or photo-chemical smog, the dirty stuff we see in the air and the stuff which is so damaging to our plants.

Can we really stand a decade of breathing our current air, particularly if it worsens for the next couple of years as it is bound to do. The public is not willing to take that risk. That is why we must proceed immediately with a successful implementation plan.

A second reason we must take action to reduce air pollution is that one cannot be at all confident of your consultants' predictions about the success of air pollution devices produced by Detroit. In the first place, these devices often require autos to burn up to 10% more gasoline, offsetting any real gains. They do reduce hydrocarbons and carbon monoxide, but they increase nitrogen oxides. You say we are going to inspect for nitrogen oxides. But gentlemen, that does no good if the

devices increase that particular pollutant, which they do now. Then you note that there will be an introduction of

nitrogen oxides controls on 1973 cars and that "presumably, an inspection-maintenance program will result in emission reductions of nitrogen oxides." I would only like to say that that is quite a presumption given the past record of Detroit's pollution

devices. For example, it is now apparent that the 1966 and 1968 devices have been almost total failures.

Third, I think it is not necessarily reasonable to accept the projections you make about air pollution that are based on 1) projected vehicle miles in Portland, 2) age of vehicles, 3) failure of devices to deteriorate and 4) the success of the new 1972 devices. All of these are very chancy things.

Particularly in question are the projected vehicle miles. Those are quite dependent on how much cement is laid down in this city, how many freeways are built. The car use expands to fill the road space. Vehicle age is dependent on new car sales and the local economy. The success of new devices has not been consistent in the past.

The conclusion, then, is that we must take action. And that is, thankfully, what you are recommending. The question is, what action?

Several of your recommendations seem to me to be extremely sound. How can anyone, in this day and age, argue, with improved mass transit? And it seems to me to be very wise to explore fully the establishment of a parking tax or other incentives to induce persons entering the central business district to use mass transit or car pools.

Your plan does not mention several other programs which I feel could reduce emissions - deregulation of taxicabs and

encouragement of jitney systems in Portland, for instance. Both of these measures would reduce the need for private automobiles and reduce the number of private cars on the street. I believe that enabling buses to control traffic lights, improving bicycle access to downtown Portland across our bridges and toll systems during peak hours on our major freeways are also worth serious consideration.

Finally, I believe in several instances the plan's logic is wrong. It will not improve the quality of our air to make it easier for automobiles to move about. You suggest that by making traffic circulation improvements, by taking parking off of downtown streets and by close-in peripheral parking lots, we can improve the quality of our air. All three of those actions encourage people to drive, speed up the use of the auto, make it tougher for transit to compete. This business about allowing cars to move faster without stopping and starting, making the cars move with less air pollution, seems faulty.

When you speed up traffic by traffic signal improvements and by increasing the number of lanes by taking parking off the street, you encourage people to use their cars. That means more pollution in our air because there will be more car use.

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