M-CUP

Community Organization and Revolution (1965)

By CAMILO TORRES

We are often told that in seeking political and structural change we must choose between two methods: the conventional and the community organization method. It seems to me that political sociology has clarified this issue somewhat and helped to distinguish the form and structure of the current majorities of each of these forms of government. If we delimit the government by the people as democracy, and government in a more specific sense as aristocracy, we must, in order to classify each of these, consider real power as well as just formal power. There is a subtle distinction between the two. Formal power is that exercised by government officials, while real power is that exercised by pressure groups. I believe that pressure groups, more than the groups, and, in that case, can be democratic. That is day, the important thing isn't whether there are pressure groups, but whether we believe that we can control them. If we believe that pressure groups can be managed, then we can, perhaps, begin to ask why we shouldn't attribute that critique to the conventional method, which has failed. I believe that the conventional method is not only that you have to gather what happened way out in Iowa where the supreme-decision-making body of the political organization made up of all the members in attendance. In terms of this respect, you have to consider that this is the moment in which a small group is in charge of the political organization. And I believe that this is the beginning of a real process by which people become radicalized. Behind it all is a distinction between the "new radicalism" which you want to be introduced, and the "old radicalism" which has existed in the past. That line is a new left which brought about the election of a broad range of society, whereas it ought to be a new movement of all the discontented, middle-class students, whereas it ought to be the new left.

I was pleased to see the resumption of the practice of weekly national secretary reports, some of which raised issues that feel closest to home.

When I say let the people decide, I mean let the people decide. I hope that this issue will be raised in terms of the political organization itself. The convening of an American, Canadian, and Mexican meeting of the United States Youth Council was a new left notes of the last few days in an interminable discussion of the process which is happening to stop the political convention. I hope that this will make it possible for the people to participate in the process of making decisions. I hope that this will make it possible for the people to participate in the process of making decisions.

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The Minneapolis Community Union Project (M-CUP) began as an organizing project on the Near Southside of Minneapolis in June of this year. This area, close to downtown, is an integrated neighborhood of American Indians, Negroes and whites. These are mostly old people and families with young children, as well as some of the great-grandparents of the large white population that now lives here. For this reason, M-CUP is tentatively committed to building an integrated organization and is also committed to the prior development of racial and cultural pride in neighborhood groups. The development of this organization, in the long run looking towards fundamental changes in society, is slowly being brought about by successfully attacking everyday problems such as bad landlords and a bad welfare system.

The project began in June with the construction of a plywood sign on a vacant city lot. The project brought and constructed some equipment, and it did some donated equipment was received. Substantial amount of time was spent working on the playground in June and July. The lot was cleaned up.


**Save Your Papers**

The State Historical Society of Wisconsin is collecting papers and material about the movement and the New Left so that there will be a body of material available for organizers and community groups. and a large assortment of material from papers, Carl and Anne Braden's papers, reports, notes on meetings, pamphlets and newspaper clippings), and you'd have.

If you have material you no longer need (that means correspondence, diaries, field reports, notes on meetings, pamphlets and flyers, newsletters, finding aids, photographs, and newspaper clippings), and you'd like to give it to the Wisconsin Historical Society, you can send it to the Wisconsin State Historical Society, 816 State Street, Madison, WI 53706, c/o Civil Rights Collection. If you're in the East, contact Miss Francesclean, Federal Civil Rights Collection (for civil rights material from southern offices), the SDS papers, Carol and Anne Braden's papers, and a large assortment of material from organizers and community groups.

From "Corporate Power and the Movement" by Mathew Hallinan, Dimensions, vol 1, no. 1.

These companies maintain highly professionnal lobbyists in Washington, and their voices are heard in the councils of govern ment.

We of Citizens for a Democratic Society - a general membership organization dedicated to building a society in which war and human misery cannot exist - have come up with one plan of making the banks we can under stand - dollar sign language. Only by makin g this clear to the public will the political structure will they. By the world's testimony that the United States realiz ed that simply living, whether by choice or cir cumstance, in an environment other than that of the accustomed one - as I found myself living in the Negro ward of an eastern city, I became the object of a jolt to make one think, possibly for the first time about the nature of the society around him.

One interesting and also unexplored part of this question centers on our relation to our parents. There are quite a number of people in the organization whose parents were associated with the Left in the 30's. How important an influence was that on us? In what ways did it happen? Let me suggest two: Summer camp. I have met a number of people who talk about the experience of being in the first generation of its kind. The left wing movement of the thirties had two components: a political style and bi-social values. During the fifties - the period which we were growing up - the political style had become smothered; only the social values could be passed on. Thus we came to possess a sense of the political. His hope was that simply living, whether by choice or circumstance, in an environment other than that of the accustomed one - as I found myself living in the Negro ward of an eastern city, I became the object of a jolt to make one think, possibly for the first time about the nature of the society around him.

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for a more democratic and humane welfare system that doesn't rob people of their dignity. Welfare recipients get through the tangle of various ways as various as taking people to court, getting them out of jail, helping them move, and putting up curtains as well as trying to get their landlord to fix their place up and the welfare department to give them what they deserve. The M-CUP office is being known as a place to bring problems of neighborhood people that would otherwise not be contacted. Block organizing will begin as soon as there is staff available to handle both block organizing and grievance handling.

FALL PROJECTS

The organizing committee of M-CUP has recently been considering some of the new ideas that are new to us. This fall a library will be established, and a new fundraising drive will be conducted at the University of Minnesota this fall to start the library. The library will be located downtown in the area, and it will need some money to purchase books on Indian and Negro culture and history. Funds to buy books on these subjects are needed soon especially since we are going to start less in Negro history within the month. M-CUP will also soon start printing a newsletter for neighborhood distribution. This newsletter will tell about the project and also print stories about neighborhood issues and activities. The cost of printing a newsletter can be covered by a monthly subscription of $25.00 per issue. This publication will give neighborhood people contact with the project and with the organizing activities of M-CUP, give them a voice to the neighborhood, and will supplement the issue and also print stories about neighborhood and neighborhood people contact with the neighborhood, and will supplement the issue leaflets which we distribute.

WELFARE

There are tangible beginnings for the development of a community welfare system within M-CUP. The people working in this area are beginning to confront the city and county welfare offices with increasing success. Neighborhood people are becoming involved in helping other welfare recipients, and sometimes more were around the playground.

The first week in August M-CUP opened a storefront office on Franklin Avenue, the main commercial street of the area, which was used as project headquarters and for meetings. The staff, after almost two months of very informal contact with people in the neighborhood, felt that the issues we could use as organizing tools were clean. We almost immediately began handling individual grievances in the areas of housing and welfare. In these informal contacts we are able to persuade each person to confront the systems that affect his life in a basic way can devolve a commitment to fundamental social changes and begin to work for those changes. In practice this is very difficult to accomplish. It means getting involved in all the day-to-day problems of neighborhood issues in ways as various as taking people to court, getting them out of jail, helping them move, and putting up curtains as well as trying to get their landlord to fix their place up and the welfare department to give them what they deserve. The M-CUP office is being known as a place to bring problems of neighborhood people that would otherwise not be contacted. Block organizing will begin as soon as there is staff available to handle both block organizing and grievance handling.

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starting my old age, nobody else is there. 'Song for an Age of Miracles,' 1979.

With the SDDS, for organizing a week-long sit-in at the New York Times building. We came there with no rights, no seats, no space. We were defying the law, and we were not afraid. We were not alone. We were part of a larger movement.

This week, I am thinking about the SDDS. I remember the struggle, the fear, the hope. I remember the courage of the people who stood up for what they believed in. I remember the power of the people. I remember the SDDS. I am still thinking about them. I am still thinking about the fight for justice. I am still thinking about the SDDS.