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**Bedford-Stuyvesant:  
A Prologue**

**Editorial**

**Bedford-Stuyvesant:  
A Ghetto Action Prototype** **p. 3**

**Hon. Robert F. Kennedy**

**Problems of the Cities** **p. 7**

A statement before the subcommittee on Executive Reorganization of the Senate Committee on Government Operations, August 15, 1966.

**Hon. Robert F. Kennedy**

**If men do not build,  
how shall they live?** **p. 22**

Excerpts from a statement at the Central Brooklyn Coordinating Council's Third Annual Conference on Community Development, December 10, 1966.

**George M. Raymond and Ronald Shiffman**

**The Pratt Center for Community  
Improvement: A University  
Urban Action Program** **p. 27**

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**Editorial:****Bedford-Stuyvesant:  
A Ghetto Action Prototype**

*"Who shoots at the mid-day sun, though he be sure he shall never hit the mark, yet as sure he is he shall shoot higher than who aims but at a bush."*

*Sir Philip Sidney*

*"Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,  
Or what's a heaven for?"*

*Robert Browning*

Unlike the other unfortunate ghettos strung out throughout America's disintegrating cities, in Brooklyn's Bedford-Stuyvesant\* the question is no longer whether something will be done, or even when action will begin. Its stars are in the right conjunction and all the ingredients necessary for a major breakthrough are present.

There is, first of all, a strongly organized, well-informed, and ably led community. Unlike so many other ghetto citizen groups, the genuinely grass-roots based Central Brooklyn Coordinating Council is not out to make all progress toward the solution of the area's major problems impossible due to the unattainability of its demands. On the contrary, over the years, the CBCC has led its 93 member organizations to an increasingly successful positive interaction with the political framework within which solutions to its problems must be found. The plethora of programs which will be poured in the near future into this long neglected community of nearly one-half million almost exclusively Negro people is in no small measure due to its wise, restrained, and methodical search for the right levers of power, and for its knowledge of precisely the right amount and kind of pressure to apply each time one was found to be within reach.

Secondly, there now prevails a thoroughly business-like approach. The non-profit Bedford-Stuyvesant Renewal and Rehabilitation Corporation, composed of 20 local leaders, ably chaired by Civil Court Judge Thomas Russell Jones, was organized exclusively for the purpose of enabling the community to take maximum advantage of any and all opportunities that may materialize over the years. Unlike so many other grass roots organizations elsewhere, this action group is not likely to succumb to the ever-present temptation to spend money and enormous outpourings of energy on dubious programs, conceived exclusively through the careless concatenation of the latest psychological and sociological cliches.

Third, the presence in the picture of the Bedford-Stuyvesant Development and Services Corporation will assure the community of a means of capitalizing on every opportunity as it occurs. The principal contribution of this private business organization will be its ability to maintain the momentum of such action programs as may be launched, in spite of the endless delays caused by the need to resolve the internal contradictions which seem to be an unavoidable part of every major government program. In the absence of such a well-financed business organization, these delays have almost inevitably killed all local initiative, and have caused not only acute discomfort but also financial losses to those least able to absorb either.

*In the vacant places  
We will build with new bricks  
There are hands and machines  
And clay for new brick  
And lime for new mortar  
Where the bricks are fallen  
We will build with new stone  
Where the beams are rotten  
We will build with new timbers  
Where the word is unspoken  
We will build with new speech  
There is work together  
A Church for all  
And a job for each  
Every man to his work.*

*T. S. Eliot*

\*Bedford-Stuyvesant, with nearly half a million minority residents, is the nation's largest ghetto community.

Fourth, Bedford-Stuyvesant will be able to call on the part-time leadership of America's "miracle man" of urban rehabilitation and renewal, Edward J. Logue. In the last ten years, Logue has left an indelible mark on New Haven and on Boston (where he will continue to serve as Development Administrator). Logue believes in Bedford-Stuyvesant's future. Amazingly, he enjoys the confidence of all the actors who will have to team up to assure the undertaking's success: Washington, Albany, the City Administration, and the community. Financing of initial efforts has been assured through a combined \$40,000 Ford Foundation and Stern Family Fund grant, to be administered by Pratt Institute. And, as it has done for the last three years, the community will have available to it the continued assistance of the Pratt Center for Community Improvement, whose own modest level of funding is assured for at least another year.

Fifth, the Bedford-Stuyvesant program is breaking at a time when the City has a new Administration which is prepared to experiment and to go all out to help reverse the deadly trends of the previous decade. The City's newly appointed energetic and young Housing and Development Administrator, Jason R. Nathan, can be expected to lead the battle against slums with a vigor matched only by that with which the City's new Human Resources Administrator, Mitchell Sviridoff, will attack the attendant social and economic problems of the area's residents. Unlike so many of the city officials with whom the community has had to deal in the past, the unconditional devotion to the cause of urban regeneration of these two leaders can be counted upon implicitly.

Sixth, the physical fabric of the Bedford-Stuyvesant community is not only still largely salvageable, but those portions of it which can be saved constitute some of the potentially most desirable neighborhoods in the City of New York. Many of its brownstones are owned by families who reside on the premises, and the rehabilitation of a good many buildings would present no problem were it possible to simply make available to their owners mortgage loans for the purpose, at the going rate. With 3% FHA-insured mortgages, the preservation of the community's still sound neighborhoods will become that much easier.

And, finally, Bedford-Stuyvesant was fortunate in securing the powerful help of the State's junior Senator, Robert F. Kennedy. The purposefulness of his approach to the solution of the community's problems supplies ample evidence that he is a man of action rather than words. As did his illustrious brother, he too is moved by a totally rational analysis of the situation in all its real aspects toward a response free of the myths and preconceptions which prevent so many other able men from accepting the obvious answers to the problems they are out to solve. The prestige, ability, resources, and dedication brought to the aid of Bedford-Stuyvesant by Senator Kennedy's interest in its fate are powerful ingredients in the formula for a successful eventual resolution of its problems.

\* \* \*

If action is as imminent as appears likely, the question which must be insistently asked is what kind of programs will these efforts launch? Will they be as uninspired and as unresponsive to basic human needs as government programs have always been? Since the reasons for the sterility of so much of the national urban development and renewal effort are glaringly apparent and well documented, the leaders who will determine Bedford-Stuyvesant's future cannot escape responsibility for the quality, as well as the quantity, of new housing and community facilities which they will cause to be built in its neighborhoods. Given its history, present condition, and future potential, no effort should be spared which could cause this community to be reborn

as one of the City's most desirable places in which families could live and raise their children. Only if this objective is attained can the passage of time be expected to bring about an eventual intermingling of the races in this community in the same way, in reverse, that the gradual integration of outlying neighborhoods is now being accomplished through the Urban League's Operation Open City.\* Of one thing there need be no doubt whatsoever: if the rebuilding of Bedford-Stuyvesant will emulate the physical development patterns of the past, the area is sure to become a permanent ghetto in every sense of that ugly word — a ghetto which will continue to plague the City and its collective conscience for the next century or more.

The first and most important step toward a better future, which the community must insist be taken instantly, is the wholesale rezoning of its residential neighborhoods from their present "R-6" classification (which permits the crowding of around 90-100 dwellings per acre) to the next lower "R-5" District (which permits only about 50-60 dwellings to the acre). The "R-5" District density allows the development of imaginatively conceived groupings of high-and low-rise buildings; it permits the economical provision of off-street parking spaces adequate to prevent the flooding of surrounding streets with parked cars; it permits the on-site development of small playgrounds for the younger children; and it permits the landscaping of the grounds to assure the creation of beautiful residential surroundings. The "R-6" density, on the other hand, will result in more of the same kind of sterile, heartless, monotonous projects which the City's neighborhoods have opposed so long and so bitterly, but to so heartrendingly little avail to-date.

The change from "R-6" to "R-5" must encompass all of the community's residential areas: not only those which can be rehabilitated, but also those which must be totally rebuilt. Fortunately, Edward Logue has repeatedly and publicly declared himself to be horrified at the insolubility of New York City's ghetto problems, whose inherent complexity is compounded many times over by excessive residential densities. But while his presence and his commitment to environmental excellence may offer the community powerful support in its forthcoming struggle, the initiative must still emanate from it. Let no one assume that simply because private enterprise will be cooperating in this undertaking, the quality of the resultant effort will of necessity be high. Let us not forget that the old-law tenements were all built not by government, but by private enterprise. Housing for low- or lower-middle income families built today at densities of 100 dwellings per acre will inevitably be the substandard housing of the next generation. To allow such housing to be erected in a community where land values are as low as they are in Bedford-Stuyvesant, and where their presence would so irretrievably ruin its exquisitely human scale, would be nothing short of vandalism — the more unforgivable because it is totally unnecessary and thus, inexcusable.

In addition to rezoning, the community must insist in the fullness of its new-found voice and with all its new-found might, on excellence in community facilities. Its schools should have first-class education in first-class facilities with playgrounds. Its streets must again become the tree-shaded residential lanes which once made Brooklyn famous. New parks must be created to serve its dense population, and new imaginatively designed playgrounds must be provided to get its children off the streets. Its industry

\*Operation Open City works in ghetto areas in New York City, receiving complaints of discrimination in housing, and providing testers and checkers, legal advice, and assistance in filing complaints before government agencies. It works closely with Fair Housing Committees in the metropolitan area's predominantly white neighborhoods, and operates on a broad level to encourage integration of housing and exercising of rights in the housing field by minority group members.

and commerce must be carefully related to its residences, and heavy through traffic must be routed away from its residential streets.

Only insistence on optimum quality will give Bedford-Stuyvesant, or any other ghetto in any city in the country, a chance to cease being a community which houses only people who cannot get out into the world beyond. New York City's future, as that of the entire nation, is bound up with our ability to withstand the temptation of following the line of least resistance by allowing all the money to be made which can be made, and all the corners to be cut which can be cut, in the rebuilding of our ghettos. It is time that we stopped building projects, and got on with the task of building the kinds of beautiful and civilized cities in which the nation's future can unfold to its fullest flowering.

(GMR)

*"A fanatical belief in democracy makes democratic institutions impossible."*

*De Tocqueville*

*"The scrupulous and the just, the noble, humane and devoted natures, the unselfish and the intelligent, may begin a movement — but it passes away from them. They are not the leaders of a revolution. They are its victims."*

*Joseph Conrad*

*"Nothing doth more hurt in a state than that cunning men pass for wise."*

*Bacon*

**Hon. Robert F. Kennedy**

## **Problems of the Cities**

... To say that the city is a central problem of American life is simply to know that increasingly the cities are American Life

... Within a very few years, 80% of all Americans will live in cities — the great majority of them in concentrations like those which stretch from Boston to Washington, and outward from Chicago and Los Angeles and San Francisco and St. Louis. The cities are the nerve system of economic life for the entire nation, and for much of the world.

Everywhere men and women crowd into cities in search of employment, a decent living, the company of their fellows, and the excitement and stimulation of urban life. . . . Yet each of our cities is now also the seat of nearly all the problems of American life: poverty and race hatred, interrupted education and stunted lives, and the other ills of the new urban nation — congestion and filth, danger and purposelessness, which afflict all but the very rich and the very lucky.

To speak of the urban condition, therefore, is to speak of the condition of American life. To improve the cities means to improve the life of the American people. This is not to slight the importance of rural development. The very catalogue of problems that has accompanied the increasing urbanization of our nation bespeaks a need for renewed concentration on development outside the cities — both to ease the pressure of population growth on the cities, and to preserve the ability of our small towns and farms to contribute as they have in the past to our country's healthy growth. Rural development, then, must have a place on the national agenda; today, however, I would concentrate directly on the problems of the cities themselves and on the issues which the urban explosion has thrust before us.

### **Urban Goals**

What should we expect from our cities? A great historian of urban life, Lewis Mumford, has written: "What makes the city in fact one is the common interest in justice and the common aim, that of pursuing the good life." He drew in turn upon Aristotle, who wrote that the city "should be such as may enable the inhabitants to live at once temperately and liberally in the enjoyment of leisure." If we add the objective of rewarding and satisfying work, we have a goal worthy of the effort and work of this entire generation of Americans.

Therefore the city is not just housing and stores. It is not just education and employment, parks and theaters, banks and shops. It is a place where men should be able to live in dignity and security and harmony, where the great achievements of modern civilization and the ageless pleasures afforded by natural beauty should be available to all.

If this is what we want — and this is what we must want if men are to be free for that "pursuit of happiness" which was the earliest promise of the American nation — we will need more than poverty programs, housing programs, and employment programs, although we will need all of these. We will need an outpouring of imagination, ingenuity, discipline, and hard work unmatched since the first adventurers set out to conquer the wilderness. For the problem is the largest we have ever known. And we confront an urban wilderness more formidable and resistant and in some ways more frightening than the wilderness faced by the pilgrims or the pioneers.

### Understanding The Problem

The beginning of action is to understand the problem. We know riots are a problem. We know that poverty is a problem. But underneath these problems and all the others are a series of converging forces which rip at the fabric of life in the American city.

By city we mean not just downtown, or the central city, but the whole vast sprawling organism — covering dozens of communities and crossing state lines. It is not a political unit, but a living social and economic body — extending into suburbs and beyond into tens of thousands of outlying acres, to be covered all too soon with homes and shops and factories.

One great problem is sheer growth — growth which crowds people into slums, thrusts suburbs out over the countryside, burdens to the breaking point all our old ways of thought and action — our systems of transport and water supply and education, and our means of raising money to these vital services

A second is destruction of the physical environment, stripping people of contact with sun and fresh air, clean rivers, grass, and trees — condemning them to a life among stone and concrete, neon lights and an endless flow of automobiles. This happens not only in the central city, but in the very suburbs where people once fled to find nature. "There is no police so effective," said Emerson, "as a good hill and a wide pasture . . . where the boys . . . can dispose of their superfluous strength and spirits." We cannot restore the pastures; but we must provide a chance to enjoy nature, a chance for recreation, for pleasure and for some restoration of that essential dimension of human existence which flows only from man's contact with the natural world around him.

A third is the increasing difficulty of transportation — adding concealed, unpaid hours to the workweek; removing men from the social and cultural amenities that are the heart of the city; sending destructive swarms of automobiles across the city, leaving behind them a band of concrete and a poisoned atmosphere. And sometimes — as in Watts — our surrender to the automobile has so crippled public transport that thousands literally cannot afford to go to work elsewhere in the city.

A fourth destructive force is the concentrated poverty and racial tension of the urban ghetto — a problem so vast that the barest recital of its symptoms is profoundly shocking:

- **Segregation** is becoming the governing rule: Washington is only the most prominent example of a city which has become overwhelmingly Negro as whites move to the suburbs; many other cities are moving along the same road — for example, Chicago, which, if present trends continue, will be over 50 percent Negro by 1975. The ghettos of Harlem and Southside and Watts are cities in themselves, areas of as many as 350,000 people
- **Poverty and Unemployment** are endemic: from 1/3 to 1/2 of the families in these areas live in poverty; in some, male unemployment may be as high as 40%. Unemployment of Negro youths nationally is over 25%.
- **Welfare and Dependency** are pervasive: 1/4 of the children in these ghettos, as in Harlem, may receive Federal Aid to Dependent Children; in New York City, ADC alone costs over \$20 million a month; in our five largest cities, the ADC bill is over \$500 million a year.
- **Housing** is overcrowded, unhealthy, and dilapidated: the last housing census found 43% of urban Negro housing to be substandard; in many of these ghettos, ten thousand children may be injured or infected by rat bites every year.

- **Education** is segregated, unequal, and inadequate: the high school drop-out rate averages nearly 70%; there are academic high schools in which less than 3% of the entering students will graduate with an academic diploma.
- **Health** is poor and care inadequate: infant mortality in the ghettos is more than twice the rate outside; mental retardation caused by inadequate prenatal care is more than seven times the white rate; 1/2 of all babies born in Manhattan last year will have had no prenatal care at all; deaths from diseases like tuberculosis, influenza, and pneumonia are two to three times as common as elsewhere.

Fifth is both cause and consequence of all the rest. It is the destruction of the sense, and often the fact, of community, of human dialogue, the thousand invisible strands of common experience and purpose, affection and respect which tie men to their fellows. It is expressed in such words as community, neighborhood, civic pride, friendship. It provides the life-sustaining force of human warmth, of security among others, and a sense of one's own human significance in the accepted association and companionship of others.

### The Values of Community

We all share things as fellow citizens, fellow members of the American nation. As important as that sharing is, nations or great cities are too huge to provide the values of community. Community demands a place where people can see and know each other, where children can play and adults work together and join in the pleasures and responsibilities of the place where they live. The whole history of the human race, until today, has been the history of community. Yet this is disappearing, and disappearing at a time when its sustaining strength is badly needed. For other values which once gave strength for the daily battle of life are also being eroded. The widening gap between the experience of the generations in a rapidly changing world has weakened the ties of family; children grow up in a world of experience and culture their parents never knew. The world beyond the neighborhood has become more impersonal and abstract. Industry and great cities, conflicts between nations and the conquests of science move relentlessly forward, seemingly beyond the reach of individual control or even understanding. It is in this very period that the cities, in their tumbling spread, are obliterating neighborhoods and precincts. Housing units go up, but there is no place for people to walk, for women and their children to meet, for common activities. The place of work is far away through blackened tunnels or over impersonal highways. The doctor and lawyer and government official is often somewhere else and hardly known. In far too many places — in pleasant suburbs as well as city streets — the home is a place to sleep and eat and watch television; but the community is not where we live. We live in many places and so we live nowhere. Long ago de Tocqueville foresaw the fate of people without community: "Each of them living apart is a stranger to the fate of all the rest — his children and his private friends constitute to him the whole of mankind; as for the rest of his fellow citizens, he is close to them, but he sees them not; he touches them but he feels them not . . . he may be said at any rate to have lost his country." To the extent this is happening it is the gravest ill of all. For loneliness breeds futility and desperation — and thus it cripples the life of each man and menaces the life of all his fellows.

### The Plight of the Negro

But of all our problems, the most immediate and pressing, the one which threatens to paralyze our very capacity to act, to obliterate our vision of the future is the plight of the Negro of the center city. For this plight — and the riots which are its product and symptom — threaten to divide Americans for generations to come; to add to the ever-present difficulties of race and class the bitter legacy of violence and destruction and fear.

The riots which have taken place — and the riots which we know may all too easily take place in the future — are therefore an intolerable threat to the most essential interests of every American, black or white, — to the mind's peace and the body's safety and the community's order, to all that makes life worthwhile. None of us should look at this violence as anything but destructive of self, community, and nation. But we should not delude ourselves. The riots are not crises which can be resolved as suddenly as they arose. They are a condition which has been with us for 100 years and will be with us for many years more. We can deal with the crisis without dealing with the underlying condition — just as we can give novocain to a man with a broken arm, without setting that arm in a splint; but the end result will only be more pain, pain beyond temporary relief, and permanent crippling of our urban society.

It is therefore of the utmost importance that we go beyond the temporary measures thus far adopted to deal with riots — beyond the fire hoses and the billy-clubs; and beyond even sprinklers on fire hydrants and new swimming pools as well. We must start . . . along the road toward solutions to the underlying conditions which afflict our cities, so that they may become the places of fulfillment and ease, comfort and joy, the communities they were meant to be.

#### Federal Urban Policies

Any examination of the Federal Government's ability and will and determination to meet the domestic problems of this nation, I believe, will show that all of us have made many serious mistakes. It must nonetheless be faced with persistence and candor. For "there is no courage or discipline involved in following failure down the road to despair. Tragedy is a tool for the living to gain wisdom, not a guide by which to live."

First, it is clear that our present policies have been directed to particular aspects of our problems — and have often ignored or even harmed our larger purposes. For example, Federal housing and highway programs have accelerated the move of middle-income families and business to the suburbs, while virtually ignoring the cities' needs for new revenue and declining tax base. Our welfare programs have helped people to subsist. But after thirty years of federal welfare programs, we have just begun our first effort to help these people become independent of welfare. But this effort — the Work Experience Program of the Economic Opportunity Act — is so new and so meager that last year it managed to spend less than half of its \$160 million budget

Our public housing has been built in the center cities, on our highest-cost land, further reinforcing the segregation of the city; in 1962, 80 percent of all Federally assisted public housing projects were occupied solely by members of one race.

Public housing was once thought of as the answer to the problems of slums. Therefore it became another of those programs, addressed to some symptomatic shortcoming, which has ignored the wider problem, the other needed government action. Our housing projects were built largely without either reference or relevance to the underlying problems of poverty, unemployment, social disorganization, and alienation which caused people to need assistance in the first place. Too many of the projects, as a result, become jungles — places of despair and danger for their residents, and for the cities they were designed to save. Many of them are preserved from this fate only by screening, such as is practiced in New York City, to keep the "problem" families — who of course are most in need of help — out of public housing projects, while families with incomes as high as \$9,000 a year may live there.

And therefore public housing has been, too often, a failure. For no single program, no attempted solution of any single element of the problem, can be the answer.

In recent years, education has come to be regarded as the answer; and last year, Congress enacted an historic program of education for the disadvantaged. But past efforts to improve life-conditions simply by the expenditure of more money on education have not been notably successful: a recent Brookings Institution study, I am advised, finds that in only five percent of all cases is there any observable correlation between increased expenditure on education in the ghetto and better jobs later in life. And the major study prepared for the Office of Education has also found that other factors — family, home, general environment, and motivation — determine whether a child can benefit at all from the best schools we provide. Education has failed to motivate many of our young people because of what they could see around them: the sharply restricted opportunities open to the people of the ghetto, whatever their education. The Negro college graduate earns, in his lifetime, no more than a white man whose education ended at the eighth grade.

Now we have begun, with project Headstart, to reach further back toward infancy, in an effort to equalize educational opportunity where it counts most — at the beginning of life. But we have not carried that insight to its point of greatest importance: the family in which the child first finds itself, its vision of the world, shaping its response to all that follows for the full threescore and ten.

We know the importance of strong families to development; we know that financial security is important for family stability and that there is strength in the father's earning power. But in dealing with Negro families, we have too often penalized them for staying together. As Richard Cloward has said: "Men for whom there are no jobs will nevertheless mate like other men, but they are not so likely to marry. Our society has preferred to deal with the resulting female-headed families not by putting the men to work but by placing the unwed mothers and children on public welfare — substituting check-writing machines for male wage-earners. By this means we have robbed men of manhood, women of husbands, and children of fathers. To create a stable monogamous family, we need to provide men (especially Negro men) with the opportunity to be men, and that involves enabling them to perform occupationally."

#### Negro Unemployment

And here we come to an aspect of our cities' problems almost untouched by Federal action: the unemployment crisis of the Negro ghetto. The White House Conference on Civil Rights placed employment and income problems of Negroes at the head of its agenda for action in the United States. "Negro unemployment," it said, "is of disaster proportions. Even in today's booming economy, the unemployment rate for Negroes is about seven percent — more than twice the average for whites . . . The gap between whites and nonwhites is even greater for married people and heads of households who are most in need of a job to support their families . . . In some areas, such as Watts in Los Angeles, the rate of unemployment among Negroes is as high as forty percent . . ."

Any attempt to discuss the problems of the cities, and the ghettos which presently threaten their future, cannot ignore the findings of commission after commission, student after student, public official after public official. The McCone Commission looked into the Watts riots — and said that the most serious problem in Watts is unemployment. The Wall Street Journal looked at Oakland — and said that the core of Oakland's plight is unemployment. Kenneth Clark's pioneering Haryou study looked at Harlem — and said that Harlem's key problem is unemployment.

This should not be strange to us. In an age of increasing complaints about the welfare state, it is well to remember that less than 25 percent of those living in poverty receive public assistance. We earn our livings, support our families, purchase the comforts and ease of life

with work. To be without it is to be less than a man — less than a citizen — hardly, in a real sense, to be a father or brother or son, to have any identity at all. To be without function, without use to our fellow citizens, is to be in truth the "invisible man" of whom Ralph Ellison wrote so eloquently — the man who, John Adams said a century and a half ago, suffers the greatest possible humiliation — "he is simply not seen."

The crisis in Negro unemployment, therefore, is significant far beyond its economic effects — devastating as those are. For it is both measure and cause of the extent to which the Negro lives apart — the extent to which he is alienated from the general community. More than segregation in housing and schools, more than differences in attitudes or life-styles, it is unemployment which marks the Negro of the urban ghetto off and apart from the rest of us — from Negroes who have jobs (including Negro leaders) almost as much as from whites. Unemployment is having nothing to do — which means having nothing to do with the rest of us.

It is a shocking fact — but it is a fact nonetheless — that we are literally unaware even of the existence of more than a million Negro Americans. Our census system — our Social Security system — the whole array of government computers which threaten to compile on some reel of tape every bit of information ever recorded on all our people — this system nowhere records the names or faces or identities of a million Negro men. Seventeen percent of Negro teenagers, thirteen percent of men in the prime working age of the thirties, are uncounted in our unemployment statistics, our housing statistics: simply drifting about our cities, living without families, as if they were of no greater concern to our daily lives than so many sparrows . . .

Some are "found" in later life, when they may settle down. Some reappear in our statistics only at death. Others remind us of their presence when we read of rising crime rates. And some, undoubtedly, become visible in . . . riots . . .

#### Employment Key to Urban Problems

In my judgment, the question of employment and income is central to the solution of the problems of the city. But I do not stress it so strongly here because I believe it to be the only solution, or to be a solution by itself. There are and must be many other elements to any truly comprehensive defense (we are not in an attacking position) against the ills which afflict us. Rather I stress employment here for the following reasons:

First, it is the most direct and embarrassing — and therefore the most important — of our failures. Whatever people may feel about open housing or open schools — though I myself am deeply committed to both — still there can be no argument at all, no sense for even a committed segregationist, in the maintenance of Negro unemployment. Making sure men have jobs does not by itself mean that they will live with you, or that their children will go to school with you. It does not mean, in the long run, higher taxes or welfare costs; indeed, it means far less, and lessened costs of crime and crime prevention as well. It means the use of unused resources, and greater prosperity for all. Meeting the unemployment problem can only be to the benefit of every American of every shade of opinion.

But we have not done it.

Second, employment is the only true long-run solution; only if Negroes achieve full and equal employment will they be able to support themselves and their families, become active citizens and not passive objects of our action, become contributing members and not recipients of our charity. This is not to say that education, for example, is not critical to future employment and self-sufficiency; of course it is. But it is to say that unless we achieve employment, by whatever means or programs, we will never solve the problem. People with jobs can buy or

rent their own housing; people with adequate incomes can see that their children are educated; people with jobs can mark out their own relationships with their fellows of whatever color. But without employment, without basic economic security and self-sufficiency, any other help we provide will be only temporary in effect.

Third, there are government programs which seem at least to have some promise of ameliorating, if not solving, some of the other problems of the Negro and the city. But no government program now operating gives any substantial promise of meeting the problem of Negro unemployment in the ghetto. The Manpower Development and Training Act, the Vocational Education Act, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the Economic Development Act — these and similar efforts have been going on for five years. Yet in those same five years, while family income nationwide was increasing 24 percent, family income in Watts **dropped** by 8 percent. Just from last June to this, says the Labor Department, 950,000 new jobs were created for young men — but only 33,000, about 3.7 percent, went to Negroes — so that Negro youth unemployment is still, at a very minimum, 26.9 percent. A Labor Department spokesman explained that Negro youth "just don't have the connections."

#### Elements of an Urban Program

That remark sums up what is wrong with our cities. It capsules as well the consequences of our past errors of omission and commission. And it sets the agenda for a program for the cities today.

The program must contain certain elements.

It must attack the fundamental pathology of the ghetto — for unless the deprivation and alienation of the ghetto are eliminated, there is no hope for the city. And it must attack these problems within a framework that coordinates action on the four central elements: employment, education, housing, and a sense of community.

This is not to say that other problems and programs are not important — questions of police relations, recreation, health, and other services, and the thousands of other factors that make life bearable or a thing of joy. It is to say that these other questions can only be properly dealt with in concert with action on the major problems. A police force, for example, can exert every possible effort, and imagination, and will to better relations with the community. But it still must enforce the law. And if the conditions of the ghetto produce stealing — for which people must be arrested — or non-payment of rent — for which people must be evicted, even if they have no place to go — then the police will inevitably bear the brunt of the ghetto's resentment at the conditions which the police, through no fault of their own, enforce. For another example, recreation is good and necessary for all of us. But a donated swimming pool will not replace an absent father; nor will it produce income for that father's son, who may have to steal a pair of swimming trunks to use the pool.

Libraries are for those who can read, and sports for those strong enough to participate in them. Each strand we pick up leads us further into the central web of life, coming closer to every other thread of thought and action. The web must be grasped whole.

#### A Plan

Earlier this year I proposed one program which I believe combines the necessary elements, satisfies the essential criteria, and offers some hope of success, in dealing with our urban condition. Many of its elements are not new; almost every facet could be carried out under existing federal authority. It is a plan which is wholly consistent with the aims of the demonstration cities act . . . That act more than any other legislation . . . is based on the need to grasp



the web whole, to attack all of the problems in a coordinated, interrelated way. My proposal is one of the ways in which the demonstration cities legislation and other federal authority now existing can be put to specific and detailed use, depending on the form which local initiative takes in applying these federal programs. It is by no means the only plan that will work, or the only plan worth trying; I believe it to be one of many which we must try in the hope that some will succeed, in greater or lesser degree. Still it is a plan which I believe is eminently worth trying, and which illustrates the kind of stimulating and coordinating effort which is required under any plan.

The plan begins with a perspective: that questions of technical or surface integration are far less important now than is the building of self-sufficiency and self-determination within the Negro community; in fact, that what is too often an undifferentiated mass must be helped to form a coherent and cohesive community. Thus it is important that Negroes who have achieved financial and social security should have complete freedom to choose where to live. But it is far more important that the vast majority of Negroes be enabled to achieve basic financial and social security where they live now. It will be the work of years, and of all Americans, white and black, to decide whether most people will live in substantially homogeneous neighborhoods. But there should be no question that black neighborhoods, as well as white, should be places of security and dignity and achievement and comfort.

The plan I have proposed, then, is as follows . . . It begins with a base of employment, in a vastly expanded and accelerated program of urban reconstruction. Our cities are in dire need of rebuilding, especially at the core: in spite of the largest slum clearance and rebuilding program in the United States, the number of unsound housing units in New York, for example, increased from 420,000 in 1960 to 520,000 in 1965. In most major cities, great stocks of housing built to accommodate the influx of migrants, from rural areas and abroad, in the early part of this century, are long overdue for rehabilitation or replacement.

Our public facilities are in similar need of repair. In New York City, for example, the Commissioner of Hospitals said even before Medicare that the city-owned hospitals alone required \$50 million worth of renovation in each of the next ten years; and the dozens of private hospitals are in similar need. Center city schools and colleges are notorious for the physical deterioration of their physical plant. Our cities' beaches are polluted and parklands eroded; their parks and playgrounds are inadequate to the minimum demands of our people.

And, in the coming years, these needs will multiply almost beyond measure. Just in the next forty years, the urban population of the United States will double — which means we must build homes and hospitals, schools and shops and factories, roads and railways and airports, equal to everything we have managed to build in the two hundred years of this republic.

The Labor Department estimates that even without major government stimulation, employment in construction will expand more rapidly than in any other field in the next ten years. Given, then, the known needs of the next four decades, it is clear that if we begin now, with proper initiative and stimulation, to repair the decay of the past and meet the needs of the future, we can create hundreds of thousands of new jobs directly, and through the new demands stimulated by this addition, millions more indirectly.

#### Guidelines for Rebuilding

But let us not make the mistake of regarding these just as jobs; and let us not erect buildings for their own sake. Our needs, and the programs we will now undertake to meet them, are in fact an opportunity to make every government program, and many private efforts, more ef-

fective than ever before. In any program of rebuilding now begun, therefore, I urge the following:

1. **Priority in employment on these projects should go to residents of the areas in which they are undertaken.** The fathers and young men of Harlem need work — and this is the best kind of work we could possibly offer them.

For this is man's work — work which is dignified, which is hard and exacting, which is at the same time rewarding to the man who does it and rewarding to the community around him. Much of it is work which can be done by unskilled workers, who now have the most difficult time finding jobs; but in such a program there would be jobs of all kinds, including those requiring administrative and managerial skills.

Creating these jobs would say to the residents of Harlem that there is hope — that there is a future — that all of us are truly determined to change the conditions under which they live. In my judgement, it is not too much to say that the ready availability of jobs in Harlem would make a major change in the entire environment in which its young people grow up.

2. **Public and private training programs should concentrate their funds and their efforts in on-the-job training on these projects.** Not only will job training be needed to make initial employment possible for many of the ghetto's residents; just as important, the availability of jobs will make many of our training programs more meaningful than they have been before. Construction work has traditionally been taught through a system of apprenticeship — which means a one to one teacher-student ratio, a system of learning by doing, a system in which learning has immediate rewards and the relationship of skill to increased earning power is clear. In a very real sense, these projects could be a vast new educational institution — teaching skills, but teaching pride of self and pride of craft as well.

3. **Our educational system should be directly integrated with the rebuilding effort.**

There is real hope of solution for many of our most serious educational problems within such a program. The central problem of motivation, for example, would be directly confronted. Any high school student who so desired — whether for financial or other reasons — could be allowed to leave school to work on such a project. The schools would maintain jurisdiction over these students; and they would, as a condition of employment, be required to continue schooling at least part time until the requirements for graduation were met. In fact, all jobs on these projects should require part-time study to remedy educational deficiencies, and advancement on the job should be directly related to school credits gained, just as it is in the Armed Forces. Without the need to discipline unmotivated students, the schools would find it far easier to educate students who wish to learn. And the young men who work on these projects will learn that the ability to read a blueprint or a specification is worth returning to school to acquire.

Indeed, it would be possible to open up new opportunities for every level of education. A young man showing supervisory abilities, for example, should be encouraged to study business or public administration at the college level, either part time or full time. Strawbosses should be able to become superintendents, and perhaps receive engineering training. Appropriate branches of city and State universities could be established in the immediate neighborhood to allow maximum participation in this process.

4. **Present social service programs, particularly welfare, should be integrated with the rebuilding effort.** The program I envision would make it possible for families to turn dependence into self-sufficiency; but we must work to make possibilities into fact — for example, by using a man's new employment as an aid to reuniting him with his family. For

another example, the rebuilding program should focus in significant degree on unmet social needs — such as by constructing clinics and physicians' group practice facilities in the ghettos, which are notoriously short of medical services.

Using the building program as a base, occupational opportunities and training should be opened up in all related ways. As building takes place, for example, some should learn and then operate building-supplies business, small furniture manufacturing establishments, and other neighborhood shops. As health clinics are established, young people should be trained as medical aids. Buildings should be decorated and embellished by art students; housing should contain facilities in which students of music and drama could put on entertainments.

It should be clear that the possibilities of such a program are limited only by our imagination and daring. For it does no more — and no less — than apply to the needs of the ghetto the same entrepreneurial vision which has brought the rest of us to our present state of comfort and strength.

#### Community Development Corporations

And to fulfill that entrepreneurial vision — to bring the people of the ghetto into full participation in the economy which is the lifeblood of America — it will be necessary to create new institutions of initiative and action, responding directly to the needs and wishes of these people themselves. This program will require government assistance, just as nearly all American growth has depended on some government assistance and support. But it cannot and should not be owned or managed by government, by the rules and regulations of bureaucracy, hundreds of miles away, responding to a different constituency.

The measure of the success of this or any other program will be the extent to which it helps the ghetto to become a community — a functioning unit, its people acting together on matters of mutual concern, with the power and resources to affect the conditions of their own lives. Therefore the heart of the program, I believe, should be the creation of Community Development Corporations, which would carry out the work of construction, the hiring and training of workers, the provision of services, the encouragement of associated enterprises.

Such corporations might be financed along these lines: they would receive an initial contribution of capital from the federal government; but for their ongoing activities, they should need and receive no significantly greater subsidy than is ordinarily available to nonprofit housing corporations under present law. As with all other housing and commercial construction, the bulk of the funds would come as loans from the great financial institutions — banks, insurance companies, corporations. Government would enter by way of the common devices of loan repayment insurance, some subsidization of the interest rate, and in some cases, assistance in the acquisition of land.

These Community Development Corporations, I believe, would find a fruitful partnership with American industry; many firms, of which U.S. Gypsum is perhaps the farthest along, have actively undertaken the search for ways to bring the ghetto into the national economic market. Loans and technical cooperation from industry and commerce; trained manpower and organization from labor unions; academic and educational partnership with the Universities; funds for education and training such as those provided under many present federal programs: these would be resources thus far unknown to the ghetto, resources sufficient to mount a real attack on the intertwined problems of housing and jobs, education and income.

But a further and critical element in the structure, financial and otherwise, of these corporations should be the full and dominant participation by the residents of the Community con-

cerned. Through purchase of cooperative and condominium apartments; through subscription to equity shares; through receiving part of their pay on these projects in equity shares, such as has been done in farsighted private enterprises such as Sears, Roebuck — in these ways, residents of the ghettos could at once contribute to the betterment of their immediate conditions, and build a base for full participation in the economy — in the ownership and the savings and the self-sufficiency which the more fortunate in our nation already take for granted.

Such Corporations, each devoted to improving the conditions of a single community, could go far to changing, perhaps in revolutionary ways, our techniques for meeting urban needs — for developing and coordinating the many services and facilities, necessities and comforts, which community living requires. For example, there is in the entire area of Watts, not one movie theatre; and the notorious lack of public transportation between Watts and the rest of the city makes theatres elsewhere virtually unavailable to most of the area's residents. A corporation with minimal capital, engaged in and experienced in construction work, could build a theatre and either lease it out for operation or operate it as a community venture, with revenues paying off the mortgage — thus creating at once employment and recreation for the community. For another example, medical care is a pressing need in many ghettos. A Community Development Corporation could build the facilities — and carry the cost — of a physicians' group practice facility in a housing project, and rent the completely furnished offices to young, active practitioners.

#### Fitting Services to the Community

The point is that — in the supposed interests of efficiency — we have thus far provided municipal services only on a city-wide basis: using the same kind of organizational structure whether the city had two thousand people or two million. This technique has proved unable to meet the special needs of the ghetto, and should now be replaced by a system which allows a recognizable community to organize and secure those services which meet its own unique needs. But we may well find that this system would have benefits for non deprived neighborhoods within the city — allowing each to determine what kind of services, recreational facilities, perhaps even what kind of zoning and planning it will have. At least for matters of immediate neighborhood concern these Community Development Corporations might return us part way toward the ideals of community on a human scale which is so easily lost in metropolis: but as Jefferson said when describing a somewhat similar institution, "elementary republics of the wards," which he urged, "begin them only for a single purpose; they will soon show for what others they are the best instruments."

One purpose for which they must be an instrument, however, and one purpose which must be served by every aspect of the program I have proposed, or any other program — is to try to meet the increasing alienation of Negro youth. In a sense, young urban Negroes are only a particular case of a situation which prevails all over the world — a gap between generations so broad and deep that it can lead to the most fundamental rejections of society by the young, or the most terrible revolutions in society, worked by the young. Here in America, white young people as well as Negroes are finding their own answers, their own paths to the future which is theirs. And this is as it should be; the future is theirs, though it may be very different from what we would wish for ourselves. But among Negro youth we can sense, in their alienation, a frustration so terrible, an energy and determination so great, that it must find constructive outlet or result in unknowable danger for us all. This alienation will be reduced to reasonable proportions, in the end, only by bringing the Negro into his rightful place in this nation. But we must work to try and understand, to speak and touch across the gap, and not leave their voices of protest to echo unheard in the ghetto of our ignorance.

... This plan holds no unique virtue; others have been and will be proposed, and all should be carefully and thoughtfully considered. I have gone into this one in detail because it is only in the careful delineation of a full program that we can begin to appreciate the infinite connections between what we are prone to think of as separate matters; and to appreciate as well the consequences of those connections for the organization of the federal government's approach to the problem. I have gone into this detail, too, because I believe it indicates some components of the local initiative that will be required if the demonstration cities program is to have any substantial impact. And I would stress that even if my proposal were to be adopted, it would require other elements of many kinds to be successful — such as a major program of federal technical assistance to city police forces as they struggle with the critical problems of law enforcement under conditions created by a whole society.

#### Financing the Program

For all these programs, of course, there is a question of cost. For if it is true that existing federal authority exists to carry out almost every part of this program, yet it is equally true that present levels of appropriations will cut back on existing programs, and leave little room for new demonstration projects. And certainly the present budget, and the shortage of building credit, contain no room for the implementation of such a program on the immediate and massive scale required. Can we, then, spend more?

The evidence is clear that we can — as it is clear that we must. Our gross national product, in the last year, increased by \$40 billion, soaring over \$720 billion. The demands of Viet Nam, purportedly responsible for the cutbacks in vital education, housing, and poverty programs, in fact still represent less than 3 percent of our national product; all military expenditures, even with the expected supplemental after the elections, still take less than ten percent of the gross national product.

Our growth is so great that in two years, at present levels of taxation, federal tax revenues will be \$10 to \$14 billion greater than in 1966. By 1970, another \$11 to \$15 billion will be added, by 1975, a total of \$50 to \$75 billion over this year.

But with the growth in revenue, and even with the expenditures in Viet Nam, the federal government today is spending a smaller proportion of our gross national product than it did three years ago. If we did no more, made no greater proportional effort than we did in the early 1960's, we would add \$6 billion to our annual spending immediately.

We will spend this year, for the economic development of the 15 million people of South Viet Nam, \$600 million. But federal poverty and educational employment assistance to the same number of people in the metropolitan New York area will be less than one-sixth that amount. The people of South Viet Nam need this assistance. But so do people in the United States. And we can do both.

The financial question should be explored ... for it has the most direct and fundamental relevance to the problems of the city. Necessary as that exploration is, however, it should not be allowed to obscure the more fundamental question: do the agencies of government have the will and determination and ability to form and carry out programs which cut across departmental lines, which do not fit on organization charts, which are tailored to no administrative convenience but the overriding need to get things done? If we lack this central ability, then vast new sums will not help us. The demonstration cities proposal is a creative beginning, but it must be followed up by a demonstration of this critical ability to get things done or the sums needed will not be forthcoming.

#### Establishing the Magnitudes of Needed Programs

This has been a discussion primarily of the problems of the ghetto, since I believe that solution of those problems is essential to resolving the crisis of the cities. But the ghetto is by no means the only problem. An enormous range of action and imagination is urgently needed if we are to improve the life of urban America.

If Congress is to play its proper role in building and rebuilding the American city, we should know not only what must be done now but we must ascertain the requirements of the next decade and the years after that. And we must enact long-term legislation to give states, cities, and the Executive Branch of the Federal government the chance to prepare long-range programs with some assurance of continued support and authority.

To prepare for this needed action, I propose that Congress request the Executive Branch, using its own resources and outside experts and scholars, to prepare a comprehensive report on urban problem areas ... The report ... should explain what is now being done at every level in every branch of government, describe the planned activity of the national government over the next several years, and tell us what should be done if we are to mount an effort to improve life in the cities and maintain its quality for the future. It should examine as well the appropriate relationship and division of responsibility among Federal, State, and local government, and private groups. Such a report should not be limited by budgetary consideration. Although such matters are important, rather it should describe the nature and scale of the program which can do the job that needs to be done so that the Congress may share in the choice among competing demands for our national effort and resources. I personally believe we can do what is needed. I know it is of the greatest urgency to our health as a nation that we try. But even if we cannot do all that is required, we must know where we are falling short. Such a report should be presented to the Congress within the next 12 months.

The report should cover, I think, the following problems:

**1 We must find a way to deal with the city as it really is — a huge and sprawling organic unit — rather than as a collection of political jurisdictions whose boundaries bear little relation to either the problems or hopes for progress.** We might well consider a Marshall Plan approach to the American city. Large amounts of assistance for metropolitan needs such as schools, water supply, homes, and parks would be made available to those metropolitan areas which developed long-range programs for development reconstruction, community facilities, housing, and future growth designed to serve the needs of the entire metropolitan area. This does not mean eliminating the existing structure of Government. It does mean cooperation and a broad sensible program as a condition of Federal assistance. Under such an approach the Federal Government might provide training and technical assistance to help cities prepare such programs.

We would hope to emerge with a program which would tie together innumerable scattered and fragmented efforts and direct them toward a coherent program for the redevelopment and growth of the modern city. Much of the resources and some basic standards would be Federal. But initiative and effort would originate at the local level with ample freedom for experiment, difference, and innovation. As the Marshall Plan helped to create modern Europe, we might in this way help to create the city of tomorrow. This, in broad outline, is the aim of the metropolitan development title of the demonstration cities bill, and its passage will be a good beginning in this area.

There may be other approaches. But it is clear that we must now try to deal with the city as a living, functioning whole if it is to be a place where all the citizens can live a good life.

2. **We must learn how to accomplish increased coordination of Federal programs.** Our aim is not just to build homes or schools or hospitals. It is to construct neighborhoods and communities. All of our many programs scattered through several departments of Government should be focussed on the central objective. Thus the organization of the program for the cities is of urgent concern.

3. **We must find methods of land use and development to deter the frantic speculation which encourages suburban blight and often the construction of new suburban slums.** We should be sure there is space for recreation and for beauty, that the integrity of the recreation areas is preserved and that transportation requirements are met. There are techniques of legislation and taxation which might well be effective in carrying out this purpose. For example, advance acquisition of undeveloped land by cities and states could be financed to insure open space as the city grows. And taxation might be keyed to real and future value so as to discourage soaring and unreal prices.

4. **We must discover how to coordinate and expand housing programs so that we build neighborhood communities rather than blocks and units.** This may mean increased stress on rehabilitation of existing housing. It will mean that housing projects should be undertaken on a scale large enough to include facilities for recreation, health, and community activities within the projects, so that much of daily life can be conducted within a circle of friends, associates, and neighbors. This is one of the basic aims of the demonstration cities bill, and of the proposal for the ghetto which I outlined previously.

5. **We must find a way to keep our suburbs from becoming isolated and sterile islands within the larger city.** It should be possible for people of every income level to choose suburban living, so these communities can be enriched by the association with some of the marvelous diversity of American life; and so that citizens are not walled off from the people and problems of their own city. This need not and should not diminish the pleasure people have found in suburban living. For if we move to assure adequate education and employment to all our people, no community could suffer by the addition which might well be part of a long-range program agreed upon by the metropolitan area.

6. **We should dramatically increase the scale of urban conservation, making parks and places to play freely available to all the citizens of the city, ending the ruinous poisoning of our air and water, and giving every citizen a chance for some contact with nature and beauty in his daily life.** The open space program, and land and water conservation funds could be extended and expanded in their application to the cities. Whatever the approach, it should not be necessary to drive miles over congested highways to see natural beauty. Nature must be brought to the city dweller so that it is a part of his life, and not an occasional pleasure for the economic middle class.

7. **The proposed commission on codes, zoning, tax policy, and development standards should be activated immediately and its conclusions made a part of the report to Congress.** Funds for this commission were included in the appropriation recently passed by the Senate; its work should proceed forthwith. The enormous, varied, and often national pattern of housing codes, property taxes, and zoning restrictions is potentially — if both enforced and wisely drafted — one of the most powerful tools for remaking the face of urban America. Here, too, the decisions must be left, as they have historically been left, to local governments. But our cities should have a clear idea of the impact and occasional damage of existing laws on urban life, and they should receive the benefit of a thoughtful and thorough examination of how these laws can be designed to meet our common problems. It may even be possible to design a series of modern statutes — as we have done

with commercial law and even with criminal codes — for the consideration of local governments which lack the resources to make such a vast study themselves.

8. **We must redesign our whole confused system of urban transportation so that people can travel to work, to theatres, and places of recreation rapidly and efficiently.** An important part of this should be revised patterns of the flow of automobiles into our cities, a flow which creates congestion and danger, eats up enormous amounts of city land and poisons the air. Either the city will master the problem of the motor car or become its slave. Suburban highways and expressways also should be planned so as to maintain the physical integrity of the community and, at the very least, make it safe for children to go outdoors to play. This is a large and complex problem. New technology is offering new possibilities. But subways, streets, buses, and trains must make up a coherent system which allows people to move in relative ease at a minimum cost in the quality of the urban environment. The expanded Mass Transit program . . . will make funds available for the first time for some of these planning and design efforts. But the scope of the problem quite obviously transcends even the \$225 million a year which that program will now be authorized to offer. The report for which I call would give us the magnitude of the entire problem as the basis for our future action.

9. **We should conduct research into urban problems on a scale equal to both the need and the possibilities.** The Federal government has invested heavily in widening our scientific knowledge and human welfare. We have done very little to find new technologies and techniques for improving our cities. I would like to see a proposed program of research covering everything from new methods of home construction to the desirability of such bold ideas as the construction of entirely new satellite cities. We have done only a fraction of what we could do to bring the ingenuity and intelligence of this country to bear on our most vital domestic problems.

10. **We must find a way of coping with the severe shortage of professional urban development manpower at the local level.** Without such personnel, our cities will be permanently limited in their ability to digest and utilize available Federal aid. We need a permanent system to aid state and local government in training personnel. Such a program is authorized by law, but an attempt to provide adequate funds for it was defeated just last week in the Senate.

#### Need for an Urban Affairs Committee in the Senate

Nor should the Executive Branch be acting in a vacuum in preparing the report I have suggested. We in Congress should be prepared to consider the adequacy of our own organization to deal with urban problems. In the Senate, the matters which the new Department of Housing and Urban Development is supposed to coordinate are split among the Banking and Currency Committee, the Labor and Public Welfare Committee, and the Commerce Committee. It is time we had an Urban Affairs Committee — or at least an appropriate sub-committee — to which those who are concerned about our cities could look for Senate leadership in the development of a coordinated and rational approach to these matters . . .

These are but a few suggestions. They are neither complete nor comprehensive, but they do give, I believe, some idea of the staggering complexity and scope of the effort needed not merely to attack the obvious afflictions but also the entire urban condition. We do not only want to remedy the ills of the poor and oppressed — though that is a huge and necessary task — but to improve the quality of life for every citizen of the city, and in this way to advance and enrich American civilization itself.

**Hon. Robert F. Kennedy**

## **If men do not build, how shall they live?**

... Bedford-Stuyvesant, like other areas in the great cities all over America, has serious problems. This is a community in which thousands of heads of families, and uncounted numbers of young people sit in idleness and despair; a community with the highest infant mortality rate in the city, one of the highest in the nation; in which hundreds of buildings were abandoned to decay, while thousands of families crowd into inadequate apartments. This is also a community long by-passed and neglected by government—receiving almost nothing out of the hundreds of millions of dollars the federal government gave to the city over two decades, unable to secure a single urban renewal grant in ten years of trying.

But for all these difficulties, the spirit of Bedford-Stuyvesant has lived, the **community** has survived.

Eight months ago, we found our views on the crisis before us to be in close correspondence. You through a manifesto of the Central Brooklyn Coordinating Council, and I in a series of speeches on the urban crisis, each proposed programs to meet this crisis in a comprehensive and coordinated effort, involving the resources and energies of government, of private industry, and of the community itself.

We urged that the necessary program begin with physical reconstruction—because it is needed for its own sake, to provide decent and pleasant homes and neighborhoods; but more importantly as a base and focus for the creation of jobs—well-paying, dignified work, trades and skills which will be useful for a lifetime. Indeed, we set as our aim a vital, expanding economy throughout the community—creating jobs in manufacturing and commerce and service industries.

... For eight long months, we have met and planned and worked together... Members of my staff, officials of government departments, university professors and dedicated volunteers—all these have come to Bedford-Stuyvesant, have gone away with new awareness of the problems we face, and have come back with constructive suggestions for plans and programs. More important, there has been a commitment by the men and women of Bedford-Stuyvesant; spending their nights and weekends and vacations working toward the revival and regeneration of this community.

As a result of all this—the fruit of eight months of planning and argument and exchange of views, and of ceaseless, untiring effort by many of you here today, I have the honor to announce:

**First:** The formation of the Bedford-Stuyvesant Renewal and Rehabilitation Corporation, under the Chairmanship of Judge Thomas R. Jones and with a distinguished Board representing many elements of the community. This Corporation will assume a major role in the physical, social, and economic development of the community. We expect that it will directly and indirectly:

—act as sponsor of programs for housing and rehabilitation and renewal; and community development, including the creation and management of community cultural and recreational facilities;

—working with relevant government and community agencies, ensure that jobs created here will be filled predominantly by residents of Bedford-Stuyvesant, and that programs are created to train them for the jobs;

—facilitate economic development of the community by providing, under appropriate contracts and agreements, necessary inducements to, and cooperation with, private industry;

—sponsor, encourage and assist all efforts for improvement of education in Bedford-Stuyvesant;

—and furnish such other initiative or assistance to community enterprise and efforts as is necessary or feasible.

**Second:** To work in closest partnership with the Renewal and Rehabilitation Corporation there is being formed a Bedford-Stuyvesant Development and Services Corporation. This Corporation will involve and draw on the talents and energies and knowledge of some of the foremost members of the American business community, such as:

Mr. Douglas Dillon, former Secretary of the Treasury;

Mr. J. M. Kaplan, of the J. M. Kaplan Fund;

Mr. David Lilienthal, of the Development & Resources Corporation;

Mr. Andre Meyer, of Lazard Freres & Company;

Mr. William Paley, of the Columbia Broadcasting System;

Mr. Thomas Watson, Jr., of the International Business Machines Corporation;

This Corporation will play a major role in the entire overall program, with particular attention to planning and facilitation of economic development.

**Third:** The Development and Services Corporation has been fortunate to secure the services on a part-time basis of Mr. Edward J. Logue, Development Administrator of the City of Boston, to take on the responsibility for its initial planning and programming of activities. Mr. Logue, recently the Chairman of the study group on New York City Housing and Neighborhood Improvement, will take on a principal responsibility for the overall development effort, recruitment of staff, and preparation and execution of the programs.

**Fourth:** Major private foundations have committed support to the development of Bedford-Stuyvesant. Already, the Taconic Foundation and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund are making an important contribution through their support of community development and planning work at the Pratt Institute. Now, the Edgar M. Stern Family Fund, and the Ford Foundation have joined in an initial grant to Mr. Logue, to be administered through the Pratt Institute pending the formal incorporation of the Development and Services Corporation, to support the detailed planning and initial implementation of the development program.

**Fifth:** The Mayor of the City of New York, who is here today, and some of the extremely able members of his administration, notably Mr. Mitchell Sviridoff and Mr. Samuel Gans, have committed themselves and the City to doing everything possible to assure the success of this effort. We are looking forward to working with Mr. George Nicolau, Community Development Agency Commissioner, Mr. Carl McCall, Chairman of the Council Against Poverty, and with the anti-poverty agency soon to be designated for Bedford-Stuyvesant. Mr. Robert Weaver, Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, has indicated interest and cooperation; and we are particularly thankful to Mr. Robert Wood, Undersecretary of the Department, who did so much to assure the passage of President Johnson's imaginative Demonstration Cities Bill, which can do so much for the nation's urban areas, for coming from Washington to be with us today. Mr. Willard Wirtz, Secretary of Labor, and Assistant Secretary for

\*Excerpts from a statement by Senator Robert F. Kennedy at the Central Brooklyn Coordinating Council's Third Annual One Day Conference on Community Development in Bedford-Stuyvesant, sponsored by the Central Brooklyn Coordinating Council, Community Planning Board No. 6, and the Pratt Center for Community Improvement, on December 10, 1966.

Manpower, Mr. Stanley Rottenberg, have worked closely and cooperatively with this project, and have pledged continued effort for its success. Mr. James Allen, the distinguished Commissioner of Education in New York State, has pledged the full cooperation of his Department in developing a truly outstanding and innovative system of education at all levels in this community. And Senator Jacob Javits, who has deep interest in the problems of Bedford-Stuyvesant, has also been most helpful and cooperative.

**Sixth:** Many other organizations and individuals are contributing their energy and talent to Bedford-Stuyvesant. The Pratt Institute, under the leadership of George M. Raymond, is further extending its already important work. Mr. I. M. Pei, one of America's foremost architects, is working on a series of plans for physical design of the community — including plans for eliminating or reducing the intrusion and noise of the Long Island Railroad tracks. Funds and personnel from the labor union movement are already at work in the areas of medical services, development of employment in the medical field, and community organization. Thoughtful men in universities and organizations all over the country are submitting suggestions for plans and programs for the revitalization of Bedford-Stuyvesant.

**Seventh:** Efforts have begun to secure means of financing the necessary development. Use of government funds is being developed with relevant Federal and city agencies, including those concerned with housing and urban matters, manpower development and education. Major efforts to attract private capital are also projected.

Two months ago, Senator Javits and I were successful in one major action in this direction. We secured an amendment to the Economic Opportunity Act to provide incentive payments for private industry to carry out development operations in areas such as Bedford-Stuyvesant. The amendment also provides funds for hiring and training residents of areas like this in neighborhood rehabilitation and reconstruction, industrial and commercial development, and improvement of social services. We can expect that Bedford-Stuyvesant would be an early applicant for incentive funds under this amendment. Senator Javits' work on this provision deserves the thanks of all of us.

These are some of the steps that have been taken in the last eight months. This is, in Winston Churchill's phrase, "not the end — nor even the beginning of the end." Indeed, it is perhaps not even the end of the beginning. But it is a beginning. Bedford-Stuyvesant is on its way. . . .

In the coming months, we must develop and refine specific program components: deciding what kinds of investment are required, what kinds of commercial development should be encouraged, what kind of housing we want to build. Your workshop sessions today can begin the necessary dialogue.

And as you deliberate, as you work, there will be need for special attention to three guiding principles. These are: competence; internal cooperation within the community; and cooperation with others from outside the community.

The first of these — a rigid insistence on the most capable and efficient administration that can be provided — should be self-evident. Private enterprise will invest in Bedford-Stuyvesant only if it can be assured that this community, acting as a unit, is prepared to deal with private capital on a businesslike basis. . . .

Government and foundations will only provide the needed incentive and support money if they know that programs are soundly conceived and operated; that important positions are assigned on no grounds other than merit; that there is no room here for political dealing, or for jobs to be regarded as anything but the most sacred trust.

And if this is true for outside investment, it is even more true for the people of Bedford-Stuyvesant. The people of this area will be asked to make sacrifices — of time and convenience and effort. More importantly, Bedford-Stuyvesant wants to command its own destiny; and this will require direct investment by its own people. But if this is to take place, then those people must have faith in the programs and their leadership. The people of Bedford-Stuyvesant will be asked to pay their hard-earned money toward the purchase of cooperative or condominium apartments. They may be asked to buy shares in neighborhood cooperative grocery stores. They may be asked to invest in a local manufacturing company, or to send their children to a local private school, or to invest in a health clinic for their neighborhood. They will demand — they will be right to demand — that these enterprises, that the entire development structure in this community, be managed and operated on a thoroughly businesslike basis; that their money will not be wasted; that they will get a dollar's worth for every dollar spent.

The second need, for cooperation within the community, is also clear — as would be the futility of allowing our common purpose, the hope of this hour, to dissolve in factional disputes, in quarrels over position or title or organizational precedence. The purpose of the Corporations announced today is not to supplant or eliminate any worthwhile, constructive community program; rather it is to assist and work with any and all forces in Bedford-Stuyvesant which are working for the regeneration of the area.

There is work and achievement and distinction enough for every organization, every individual, in this community . . . We are dealing with an area of over 300,000 people directly affecting hundreds of thousands more, indirectly perhaps influencing the hopes of millions all across the country. There will be here, in the years ahead, hundreds of plans and programs, thousands of opportunities for the vigorous and dedicated, the young in spirit of every age, to grab hold of responsibility and make their mark in this community and in the wider community of the city around us. If our purpose is one, we can recognize many roads to the goal; but if each looks first to personal or factional advantage, we can never succeed.

Third is the need for cooperation between the community and all those — the businessmen, and the public officials, and the experts — who are joined with you in this effort. This community, in the last analysis, must do the job itself. Only you can mobilize the workers, enlist young people in training programs, induce others to continue or resume their education, fire the imagination and the spirit of the community. And you know this community as no outsider can.

But at the same time, we will all have to listen to and consider most carefully the advice, and the recommendations, and sometimes the absolute requirements of others. If a government program requires a certain standard of operation, that standard must be maintained. If a businessman requires a certain kind of training program to help him offer jobs to people here, then that kind of training program must be devised. If banks require a certain kind of feature in a financing arrangement before they will make loans for housing, those arrangements must be satisfactorily made. If the city needs to coordinate efforts in Bedford-Stuyvesant with efforts elsewhere, then cooperation must be given. And if others . . . urge that a course of action is best for the community, then we must all listen carefully, and remember that ideas and goodwill — and competence — know no bounds of color or neighborhood.

We are all in this together. If there is to be a better future here, we will all have to stay together. Today on this platform and in this room, there are Democrats and Republicans, white and black, businessmen and government officials, rich and poor, and people from every part of this varied community. This is a unique effort — the only one of its kind and scope in the country. We have to show that it can be done.

But let there be no mistake. It would be easy, at this moment to relax in the enjoyment of such progress as we have achieved in these few months. But all that is past is prelude; and all the work remains to be done. The houses are not yet rebuilt, the unemployed not yet at work, the children not yet learning, the sick not yet healed. What remains is the heart of the matter; and fulfillment will be the hardest part of the task. There will be times when progress seems ephemeral and fleeting, times of great disappointment and discouragement. Always there will be work — ceaseless, untiring effort, by none as much as the people in this room.

For this is a task of unparalleled difficulty. This is not just a question of making Bedford-Stuyvesant "as good as" someplace else. We are striking out in new directions, on new courses, sometimes perhaps without map or compass to guide us. We are going to try, as few have tried before, not just to have programs like others have, but to create new kinds of systems for education and health and employment and housing. We here are going to see, in fact, whether the city and its people, with the cooperation of government and private business and foundations, can meet the challenges of urban life in the last third of the twentieth century.

And it is Bedford-Stuyvesant that is the vanguard — Bedford-Stuyvesant that can take the lead. If we here can meet and master our problems; if this community can become an avenue of opportunity and a place of pleasure and excitement for its people, then others will take heart from your example, and men all over the United States will remember your contribution with the deepest of gratitude. But if this effort — with your community leadership, with the advantages of participation by the business community, with full cooperation from the city administration, with the help of the outstanding men in so many fields of American life — if this community fails, then others will falter, and a noble dream of equality and dignity in our cities will be sorely tried . . .

*"Civilization is impossible without traditions, and progress impossible without their destruction. The difficulty, and it is an immense difficulty, is to find a proper equilibrium between stability and variability."*

*Gustave Le Bon*

*"We do not need the learned men to teach us the important things. We all know the important things . . . Gigantic industry, abysmal knowledge, are needed for the discovery of the tiny things — the things that seem hardly worth the trouble."*

*Chesterton*

George M. Raymond and Ronald Shiffman

## The Pratt Center for Community Improvement: A University Urban Action Program

*"I know of no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it away from them, but to inform their discretion by education."*

*Thomas Jefferson*

Democracy, as Winston Churchill once remarked, is a most troublesome form of government, but it is the best there is. To make democracy endure, it must be constantly renewed so as to make its institutions and processes meaningful to all members of each new generation. And, as Thomas Jefferson never tired to point out, at the very base of the whole edifice is education, for it is an axiom that democratic processes cannot unfold among people who are ignorant of their purposes and procedures.

In 1954, stung by repeated failures of even well-conceived urban renewal projects, the federal government decreed that all renewal activities must in the future take place with full citizen participation. A few years later, in 1964, opening the nation's official "war on poverty" the Economic Opportunities Act went even further and required that the "poor" be given maximum feasible direct participation in all programs affecting them. These federal steps represent significant milestones on the way toward the humanization of what had until then been an ever-growing urban bureaucracy, relatively isolated from the people who are its ultimate constituents. Experience in one community after another, however, clearly proved that "citizen participation" can be a futile exercise, devoid of all but, perhaps, symbolic meaning, unless the citizens who are asked to participate have a reasonably thorough understanding of the alternatives available to them and of the basics of the programs in which they are asked to participate. It was the desire to bring about a certain degree of equality of knowledge between city and community representatives that was responsible for the establishment of the Pratt Center for Community Improvement.

The Center was started in 1963, as the Pratt Community Education Program, with the assistance of a \$94,000, three-year grant from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund. During the year or two just prior to its founding, the City of New York had experienced some of the most violent upheavals in the stormy history of its controversial urban renewal program. Jane Jacobs, even before the publication of her regrettably slanted "Death and Life of Great American Cities", had led the embattled bohemians of West Greenwich Village to victory over the prostrate bodies of the City's leading housing and planning bureaucrats. Encouraged by her triumph against a project of doubtful parentage and intent, Jane Jacobs crossed the East River into Brooklyn and helped a few articulate groups in Cobble Hill defeat a project conceived by the community, whose purpose was solely that of helping its residents rehabilitate their homes.

The fact that the people of Cobble Hill allowed themselves to be stampeded into protesting a proposal which the City had advanced in response to the community's own initiative greatly puzzled the head of Pratt's Department of City and Regional Planning. Only a few months

earlier, the Department had completed a student project consisting of a preliminary plan for the rehabilitation of a section known as Cobble Hill. The study had been requested by the residents of the community (banded together as the Downtown Area Renewal Effort, or DARE). Their efforts had been assisted by a small grant from the Fred L. Lavanburg Foundation. The plan had been presented to an enthusiastically approving audience which packed much of the vast Brooklyn Academy of Music. And despite the preliminary plan's general commitment to maximum feasible rehabilitation with the aid of low cost loans, and despite the substantial support it enjoyed throughout its preparation, a majority of those who attended the hearing held by the Board of Estimate on whether it should authorize the filing of an application for federal planning funds successfully pressured the Board into inaction.

The ultimate meaning of this fiasco was unmistakable: unless public understanding could be achieved, there could be no objective evaluation of the merits of individual urban renewal proposals. The inevitable final result would be that New York's desperately needed housing and renewal programs would be brought to a total standstill. This eventuality would not have proven too distasteful to various and sundry aspiring young lawyers, who found in the fomenting of emotionally charged opposition to urban renewal a sure-fire issue in their battle for political recognition; nor would the demise of renewal have displeased a host of self-styled leaders who tried to use people's fear of change as a stepping stone to social revolution or to the resurgence of the more virulent forms of so-called "conservatism". To informed New Yorkers, however, the prospect of total inaction in regard to the enormous problem presented by its million people who still live in the slums was totally unacceptable. The Rockefeller Brothers Fund Trustees shared this view, and agreed to fund what was intended to be an essentially educational program.

In 1962, when the request to the Fund was first prepared, the idea of "urban extension" work by universities was still in its infancy.\* The particular context which first motivated the Pratt Department of City and Regional Planning to involve itself institutionally in the problems of the community established clearly the initial outlines of its activities. Its prime concern was with physical development and with the need to eliminate the obstacles which then prevented its unfolding.

As he had always been, the head of the program was fully cognizant of the impact on the social structure and individual lives of urban renewal activities.\*\* But, unlike its effect on many of the City's most concerned civic leaders, the realization that physical development has social implications did not paralyze the Pratt group into inaction. The slums were still there, all-pervading, too obvious and too overwhelming in their stunting impact on their unfortunate victims' lives to be ignored. And so, while fully cognizant of the fact that "decent homes in suitable environments" cannot cure all of the nation's social ills, the Center acted on its conviction that the elimination of slums can greatly assist in their solution. The staff also believed, along with Gunnar Myrdal, in the immense job-creating potential for slum dwellers inherent in a major slum elimination program. And, finally, everyone was also fully aware of the fact that, once set in motion, physical improvement programs inevitably trigger a multitude of social advances, which no amount of moral exhortation could set in motion in the absence of a program which brings the problems of a given area to the surface.

\*Where, according to a recent report by the Ford Foundation, it still largely remains. Of nine programs funded by that foundation, the only one which has been recognized to be reasonably successful was that conducted by ACTION-Housing, Inc., of Pittsburgh, an organization not connected with any institution of higher learning. The other programs were conducted by eight land-grant universities. ("Urban Extension" A Report on Experimental Programs Assisted by the Ford Foundation, Ford Foundation, Office of Reports, New York, 1966.)

\*\*During the previous decade, the author, who founded and who still directs the Pratt Center for Community Improvement, had served as consultant on some 75 urban renewal projects in almost as many communities throughout the Middle-Atlantic and several Southern states.

### Program Orientations

As they have evolved to date, the Center's activities have been carried out on three levels.

The major area of concentration deals with technical assistance to "target" or recipient communities, such as the Negro ghetto in the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn. In these areas, the program offers technical assistance to community leaders, public and private agencies, and civic associations, and assists in the coordination of community efforts through broad dissemination of reports, a monthly community newspaper, and liaison with city and other public officials.

The efforts of ghetto residents to rebuild and rehabilitate their neighborhoods and their people can only succeed if the rest of the community accepts their objectives as valid. In view of the enormous confusion which has reigned in the City for the last decade on this subject, a major educational effort directed at the city as a whole is essential. To this end, the Center has involved the most respected and most highly organized city-wide citizen organizations (such as the Citizens' Housing and Planning Council of New York, the Park Association, the Council for Parks and Playgrounds, the Association of Neighborhood Councils of Greater New York, etc.) in the joint sponsorship of conferences and other projects dealing with issues affecting the entire city in its metropolitan setting. In addition to its well-attended four annual conferences, the Center has attempted to disseminate new ideas through the preparation of a substantial amount of educational and reference material on such subjects as citizen participation, social planning, government organization, parks and recreation, landmarks preservation, and so on.

The third program orientation involves direct participation in grass-roots activities and the development of physical demonstration projects. The end objective of this phase of the Center's activities is to help the community attract public notice and the maximum outside public and private assistance in all possible forms, from all possible sources.

### The Participant Education Process

The communities with which the Center has become involved are directly affected by urban decay, including substandard housing, inadequate public services, inadequate school and recreation facilities and programs, poverty, unemployment, poor transportation, chaotic land use, and the whole discouraging array of social and economic problems which pervade underprivileged areas. In its early days the program attempted to provide relatively formal learning experiences, including lectures, seminars, and other classroom education. It soon became quite clear, however, that the "students", already tired (it by a long day's work, could hardly be expected to enjoy going to school (all classes were held at night to accommodate the needs of the participants who were otherwise employed). The program then switched to a more directly goal-oriented approach, best described as a "participant education process". This process, which consists of continuous participation by the program staff in local meetings and projects, has proven to be a much more effective approach to working with community groups than the initial attempts to reach residents through adult education or the normal variety of university extension programs. The "participant" education and technical consultation process becomes imperceptibly an integral part of the community's own efforts and activities, and consequently assumes a much more meaningful role than any formal education or distant consulting relationship possibly could. Rather than saying "I recommend that you do thus-and-so", the technician thus becomes able to say "I think we should proceed along the following lines". To succeed, this process requires total flexibility of program and scheduling so as to enable the staff to adapt almost instantly the educational and technical services provided to the needs of a particular group or project.



In essence, the "participant education process" aims to achieve the following goals:

1. A basic public understanding of housing, planning, urban renewal, and related programs.
2. A clear public understanding of realistically available alternative programs and the probable consequences of each (including that of inaction), in order to give the community a greater degree of flexibility and choice in determining its course of action, and to enable it to eschew the paralysis which frequently results from its inability to recognize, and choose among, mutually exclusive objectives.
3. The development of easily understood and precise statements of the specific steps agreed upon as necessary to achieve the desired results in connection with each community program.
4. The clarification and merging of major community interests, the resolution of inter-group conflicts, and the neutralization of baseless or purely chauvinistic local biases within the community in order to obtain the broadest possible consensus and maximize the chances that a substantial number of the area's major problems will be solved.
5. The broadening of the area of contact among community groups to achieve maximum community involvement as soon as possible.
6. The development of effective techniques for reaching the official decision-making structure and for eliciting a positive response therefrom.

#### Evolution of the Program

Specific program activities which have been undertaken consonant with these goals are as varied as they are numerous, and can best be understood by describing the events which led to their development.

In early 1964, the Church Community Services Commission, an organization of ministers representing a cross-section of Bedford-Stuyvesant churches, asked the Center to undertake a study of Stuyvesant Heights, a 16-block predominantly, although by far not exclusively, middle-income area. This area adjoins a proposed urban renewal project known as "Fulton Park". The ministers' principal concern centered on the possibility that the renewal project would have a negative impact on its sounder surroundings, including the Stuyvesant Heights area, by accelerating an already sharply perceptible out-migration of long-time resident leadership families from their community. As might be the case in any human community, but perhaps felt more acutely in a ghetto area, the sudden exodus of even a few families from Stuyvesant Heights might well have left an almost total leadership vacuum. The Fulton Park Community Council, composed of residents of the proposed renewal project area, many of whom are low-income homeowners, feared renewal because to them it meant the obliteration of their homes and neighborhood by uncontrolled bulldozers. The Fulton Park Community Council was a member of the Central Brooklyn Coordinating Council, an exceedingly well-organized group representing 93 member grass roots organizations. The Central Brooklyn Coordinating Council's primary interest at that time was in the establishment of Youth-in-Action, the community's official anti-poverty agency, and in coordinating the efforts of its member organizations toward the achievement of a few specific community-wide objectives, among which the construction within the community of moderate rental housing and of major community facilities (such as a hospital and community college) were paramount. The intimate and vital interest of these organizations in their area did not blind them to the need for evolution and change; indeed, each in its own way had long been actively pursuing that goal. Unfortunately, however, because of the City's almost incredibly poor and insensitive performance in recent years, most of these

groups were suspicious of the renewal program and were highly skeptical of the city's motivation.

The completed report\* showed Stuyvesant Heights to be an area of still excellent homes, with a high ratio of resident home ownership, but in great danger of rapid deterioration as a result of influences from immediately beyond its borders. Its call for prompt city action was endorsed by, among others, Robert C. Weaver, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

Publication of the report was followed by a call for assistance from the Fulton Park Community Council, which desired to draft its own survey. This became essential due to the suspicion of the City's motives engendered among local residents by the abortive attempts of the City Planning Commission's Community Renewal Program to conduct such a survey. The City's efforts had broken down because of its inability to communicate clearly the intent and meaning of the survey and the ultimate purpose of the questions it proposed to ask, and of its failure to clarify the role of the Community Renewal Program's community organization staff in relation to the City and the community.

The local residents' technical understanding of the renewal program was minimal, and what they did know was based on hearsay or on impressions gained from fleeting acquaintance with some of the City's other projects. Their fears led them to oppose the program, and thereby to sacrifice the community's best available chance of launching it on a course toward the changes it so obviously needed. After a series of broadly representative community meetings, however, and after the Fulton Park Community Council requested the Center's assistance, the participant organizations accepted the Center's offer to help them investigate whether renewal alternatives which they might find more acceptable than the ones with which they were familiar were available, and whether they could be applied to their particular needs. To this end, the Center, in conjunction with the Central Brooklyn Coordinating Council, scheduled a series of field trips to Baltimore and New Haven, cities whose pace-setting rehabilitation-type renewal programs had achieved national prominence. The objective of these trips was to help residents develop an understanding of renewal based not on vague impressions of poor local renewal projects, but on their actual experience of projects developed elsewhere by more dedicated and better informed leaders who were determined to act in accordance with not only the letter, but also the spirit of all applicable laws and regulations. Over 100 members of the Central Brooklyn Coordinating Council, the Fulton Park group, and various other organizations took part in these trips.

#### Local Conferences

Word of the favorable impressions gained by all participants filtered throughout the community, and produced an immediate positive reaction. It soon became quite obvious, however, that the continued persistence of the accumulated misinformation and confusion regarding the purposes and potential of existing housing, planning, and urban renewal programs among the thousands of interested local residents who had not participated in the trips would nullify all efforts to initiate positive programs for the Central Brooklyn area.

To consolidate support behind an action-directed approach to the physical and social improvement of the community, the Center assisted the Central Brooklyn Coordinating Council to mount a series of community-wide conferences on the "War on Poverty", and on Housing and Urban Renewal. Each of the two conferences were attended by over 500 community leaders. In November, 1964, the Housing and Renewal Workshop of the "War on Poverty" Conference

\*"Stuyvesant Heights: A Good Neighborhood in Need of Help," Community Education Program, Department of City and Regional Planning, Pratt Institute, 1964.

hammered out a comprehensive program for the **Total Renewal and Rehabilitation of Bedford-Stuyvesant**. The recommended approach was similar to that which was ultimately incorporated in the Federal "Model Cities" (first known as the "Demonstration Cities") program, 18 months later. The program was enthusiastically embraced by the conference.

The program for the total renewal and rehabilitation of Bedford-Stuyvesant requires massive federal, state, and city assistance, and it was clear to all concerned that its initiation could not be expected for some time. To maintain momentum of civic involvement in community problems in the meantime, the Center helped local groups to tackle more immediately realizable objectives. As an example, one of the prime sources of civic concern was the prevalence of vacant, burned-out, and abandoned buildings and rubbish-strewn lots in the community, which constituted a major health and safety hazard for the children who used them as play areas, as well as for neighboring residents in general. A survey undertaken by the Center jointly with the Central Brooklyn Coordinating Council revealed the presence of 378 vacant lots and 346 abandoned buildings scattered throughout Bedford-Stuyvesant. Many of these were city-owned. The strong efforts made to date to enlist City and Federal assistance in eliminating these health hazards and eyesores have been responsible for the filing by the Housing and Redevelopment Board of an application for a Federal Demolition Grant, covering almost the entire community. The survey data was also used as a basis for the formulation of a list of preferred sites for vest-pocket parks.

#### The Vest-Pocket Park Program

The City agreed to clean, surface, and fence five vacant city-owned areas and lease them to the community, at \$1 per year. The Center felt that this step presented an excellent opportunity for the outside world to supply concrete evidence of its concern and desire to help ghetto residents develop first class residential neighborhoods. The assistance of the noted landscape architect, M. Paul Friedberg (an instructor in the Pratt Institute School of Architecture), was secured and upwards of \$20,000 in grants was obtained from the Avalon and New York Foundations, Mays Department Stores, and several personal and family donations. The Center then proceeded to design and, using local unemployed labor, to actually build two vest-pocket parks laid out so as to provide an imaginatively conceived, continuous multiple-use play area. In the case of one of the two parks, the Center had to purchase and turn over to the City a strategically located privately owned lot which was needed to round out the site. The Central Brooklyn Coordinating Council worked with interested block associations and, in conjunction with them, co-sponsored the park. This meant that the participating groups agreed to accept the responsibility for supervising recreation programs and for the operation of the two parks. Maintenance of the facilities was entrusted to the Neighborhood Youth Corps.\*

#### Other Studies

Another major problem affecting the community was the huge superfluity of liquor stores—as many as four to a corner,—which had been licensed for the Bedford-Stuyvesant area. The Central Brooklyn Coordinating Council, with the help of the Center, collated data on liquor store sites and presented it formally to the State Liquor Authority and Governor Nelson Rockefeller. This effort was followed up by continuous pressure to prevent the granting of additional licenses for liquor stores in the area. In one instance, the Center assisted the

Pratt Area Community Council to mount a successful action program designed to prevent the leasing of a vacant store for a liquor facility.

Another activity which the Center undertook at the request of the Central Brooklyn Coordinating Council was a survey of subway and bus routes in Bedford-Stuyvesant, which proved the inadequacy of existing service in the area. Armed with the results of the Center's study, the Council, Brooklyn CORE, and other action agencies presented the community's case to the Transit Authority and gained improvements in routes and free transfer points for its residents.

Yet another example of the kind of successful activity in which the Center engaged jointly with community groups is its staff's involvement in the preparation of background data for hearings held by the State Insurance Superintendent on the unavailability of fire insurance in the area. These hearings, as was the case with the State Liquor Authority, were requested on the basis of data compiled by the Center, and resulted in a commitment by the Governor to introduce remedial legislation in the 1967 session of the State Legislature.

The Center also recognized the need to expose important political figures and their key staff assistants to a first-hand acquaintance with conditions in the area. One of its most successful activities is a sort of constant "Cook's Tour" of the most dilapidated buildings and the most junk-strewn alleys as well as of areas of strength which illustrate what most of the community could still become. These tours, conducted in cooperation with the Central Brooklyn Coordinating Council, have given a true view of the conditions which plague the community to such leaders as Senators Robert F. Kennedy and Jacob S. Javits; the former Chairman of New York City's Housing and Redevelopment Board, Herbert B. Evans; the most sensitive and effective of New York City's seven Planning Commissioners, Elinor C. Guggenheimer; etc. Each of these visits resulted in the establishment of continuing liaison between the Center and the Central Brooklyn Coordinating Council and the officials involved, which, in turn, has led to far-reaching results.

#### Toward a "Model Cities" Program

The level of sophistication of local understanding of the issues led the Bedford-Stuyvesant leadership to stake out, clearly and forcefully, an early claim on a Model Cities program in their community. In its original form, the federal legislation would have limited the application of the program to only one neighborhood in each of the 60 to 70 cities which were expected to participate. In statements and editorials, the community pointed out that, while one such program, covering a vast portion of the blighted areas of a smaller community might be sufficient, New York City needs at least two such programs, i.e. in Harlem and in Bedford-Stuyvesant. The community also pointed out that it was ready to receive such a program since it had espoused a similar approach as long as 18 months prior to the Administration's announcement. Finally, the community was also able to show that the quality of the basic building types in the area (three-story brownstones, covering less than 50% of their lots), the generally still good or fair condition of most buildings, and the prevailing high rate of home ownership, all contributed to a much greater chance of success here than in the dense five- and six-story tenement areas elsewhere. (This latter argument was advanced not in order to deprive any other area of the assistance which many so desperately need, but in order to strengthen Bedford-Stuyvesant's claim for a simultaneous parallel program.)\*

\*Recent cutbacks in the Neighborhood Youth Corps program have left the question of maintenance unresolved, with the financial burden unfortunately falling on block associations which are simply unable to meet its cost. Pending resolution of this problem, possibly through assumption of responsibility by the City, maintenance has been provided by the Center.

\*Over two years earlier, the Center had pointed out that the magnitude of New York City's problems was such as to require a special approach. The suggestion was made that Congress look upon the City's vast concentration of poverty as another example of a "depressed" region, requiring the same kind of reaction as that which launched the Appalachia program.

The community's new-found voice, as articulated at its area-wide conferences and in its publications—in all of which it was assisted by the Center—, as well as by the Center itself in its own publications and annual conferences, was finally heard. The first to respond, and still by far the most helpful to date, has been Senator Robert F. Kennedy. Deeply impressed by the conditions to which he was exposed on his tour in February, 1966, and also fully convinced that a prompt community-wide effort in Bedford-Stuyvesant could prove that this nation can still find a way to solve the problem of urban decay, he charged his own staff with the responsibility of advancing the work already so well underway. Among the many instances of his constructive assistance to the community, the most far-reachingly significant is the recent establishment of two non-profit corporations. The first is a non-partisan, broadly representative local Community Development Corporation (the **Bedford-Stuyvesant Renewal and Rehabilitation Corporation**).<sup>\*</sup> The second is the **Bedford-Stuyvesant Development and Services Corporation**, whose directors include some of the foremost members of the American business world, under the chairmanship of Andre Meyer, Chairman of the Board of Lazard Freres & Co. The role of this Corporation is to stimulate and facilitate the investment of resources from the private business community, in conjunction with foundation and government support, in the physical and economic rebirth of Bedford-Stuyvesant. Pursuant to a grant from the Ford Foundation and the Edgar M. Stern Family Fund, to be administered by the Center, the Development and Services Corporation has secured the part-time services of Boston's famed Development Administrator, Edward J. Logue, to plan and program its initial activities.<sup>\*\*</sup>

#### City-Wide Conferences and Publications

Ever since its active community organization program began, the Central Brooklyn Coordinating Council has been most anxious to spread, as widely as possible, news about the fast-multiplying instances of positive activity in the community. This was felt to be particularly necessary in order to counteract the demoralizing adverse publicity which the occasional local crime, fire, or other calamity invariably unleashed throughout the metropolitan press. Quite early in its program, the Center accepted the responsibility of assisting the Council's publication of a monthly newspaper, the **Central Brooklyn Coordinator**. This publication combines news about various community efforts with factual discussions of all new developments in housing, planning, and urban renewal at all levels. That this kind of information is of interest to the community is proven by the fact that the **Coordinator's** circulation now exceeds 10,000 copies.

<sup>\*</sup>The Corporation's purposes, as contained in its Certificate of Incorporation, are as follows:

- (a) To promote, assist and participate, alone and with others and in every way, in the physical rehabilitation and redevelopment of Bedford-Stuyvesant.
- (b) To develop an overall plan and such subsidiary plans as may be necessary or convenient to coordinate or assist such physical rehabilitation and redevelopment, taking into account the economic and social needs of Bedford-Stuyvesant as they relate to (without limitation) the rehabilitation of existing structures, all other housing and urban renewal programs, and the availability of adequate mass transportation, adequate schools, parks and community facilities of all kinds.
- (c) To provide assistance of all kinds, including (without limitation) the rendering of advice, technical services and financial aid in connection with securing private and government aid or assistance, to individuals, associations, corporations and organizations of all kinds, organized for profit or otherwise, interested in or working for the physical rehabilitation and redevelopment of all or any part of Bedford-Stuyvesant, and to encourage the formation of such organizations.
- (d) To assist and cooperate in every way with federal, state and local departments, agencies and organizations of government of any kind in furtherance of the purposes of the Corporation and to the end that Bedford-Stuyvesant shall receive the maximum possible benefit from federal, state and local aid and other programs related to physical rehabilitation and redevelopment.
- (e) To cooperate with other private organizations and government agencies in ameliorating and eliminating undesirable economic and social conditions in Bedford-Stuyvesant.
- (f) To use whatever methods it deems appropriate and advisable to further the foregoing purposes including, without limitation, conducting, alone or with others, demonstration projects involving the acquisition, construction and rehabilitation of land, buildings and improvements, and such stores, offices, social, communal or other non-housing facilities incidental to such project.

<sup>\*\*</sup> The new program was announced by Senator Kennedy at the Third Annual Conference of the Central Brooklyn Coordinating Council, which was co-sponsored by the Pratt Center for Community Improvement and Community Planning Board No. 6. Full support for the Bedford-Stuyvesant program was pledged by Senator Jacob K. Javits and Mayor John V. Lindsay, who were also present, and by Governor Nelson Rockefeller. (See "If Men Do Not Build, How Shall They Live?" elsewhere in this issue).

In addition to its collaboration with community groups, the Center is also conducting a continuing program of information services. Among its publications, which constitute a major portion of its program, is the 300-page **Pratt Planning, Housing, and Urban Renewal Guide for New Yorkers**,—the first comprehensive effort ever made in New York City to list and explain the purposes and complex procedures of the numerous City agencies which play a role in determining the nature of its development. The book was an overwhelming success, and is presently out of print. (A revised edition is planned for publication after the ongoing reorganization of New York City's government is completed and after its new procedures will have become established). A companion publication is the **Community Information Manual** (Central Brooklyn Edition), now in its third printing. This publication offers local residents a complete directory of social, educational, employment and other services available to them in their neighborhoods, and information on how they can best avail themselves thereof. Other publications include **Pratt Planning Papers**, a quarterly review with nationwide circulation; **Social Planning: A Primer for Urbanists**, by Elizabeth Wood; **Parks in New York City's Future: Proceedings of the Third Annual Pratt Planning Conference**; and **Artists in Metropolis**, by Hall Winslow. The Center also publishes frequent **Community Information Bulletins**, a newsletter service intended to achieve more rapid distribution of information on developments in housing, planning, and renewal than does the Coordinator, and which is mailed directly to community groups. This bulletin enables local groups to mobilize while issues are still subject to grass roots influence, and thus to take part in the decision making phases of program development.

In addition, each year the Center organizes a city-wide conference on a timely major topic. Conference themes have included a discussion of the role of the State in the reallocation of powers as between central cities and their suburbs in metropolitan areas;<sup>\*</sup> a discussion of the need for decentralization of New York City's massive bureaucracy in the interest of greater responsiveness to human needs;<sup>\*\*</sup> a discussion of the future of the City's parks; and a discussion of the relationship of planning to action in New York City's government. All four conferences had a measurable impact on the course of events in the areas they covered.

#### Lessons Learned

What conclusions, if any, can be reached at the end of nearly four years of activity and an expenditure of about \$185,000 by the Pratt Center for Community Improvement? The only truly significant measure of the results of such a program is, of course, the extent to which things eventually happen differently from the way in which they would were it not for its existence, and the extent to which the lives of the people in what is now generally termed the "target areas" will have been improved thereby. No such "net impact" evaluation is possible, however, since the program has operated in a dynamic context, where it always was only one force among many which affected the course of events. It would therefore be most difficult, if not totally impossible, to isolate those occurrences for which it was directly responsible or which it modified from those that would have happened anyway. Nor would it be realistic to quantify its effects in any way which would make it possible to subject the effort to a cost-benefit evaluation of its worth.

The latter point is illustrated best by the Center's vest-pocket park program. The principal value of the two small vest-pocket parks which were actually built lies not primarily in their

<sup>\*</sup>The position advanced by the Center in 1963 was not unlike that advocated in a recently published report of the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations—See George M. Raymond, "Can Metropolitan Planning Solve the Metropolitan Crisis?", Pratt Planning Papers, Vol. 2, No. 1, April, 1963).

<sup>\*\*</sup>The position advanced by the Center in 1964 was similar to that advocated in Edward J. Logue's recent report ("Let There be Commitment") to Mayor John V. Lindsay on the reorganization of the City's housing, planning, and development functions—See Editorial in Pratt Planning Papers, Vol. 3, No. 2, November, 1964.

benefit to the children whom they serve—although, in an area as totally deprived of open space, that too is immeasurable. Rather, their chief benefit lies in the impact which the successful involvement of the community organizations concerned had on their morale and will to continue their struggle for broad community improvement programs. These, and other limited successes helped hold the Central Brooklyn Coordinating Council's leadership together through many months of frustration and a long and seemingly hopeless process of trying to interest the City's decision-makers in the future of Bedford-Stuyvesant. A few concrete accomplishments along the way were essential to its ability to continue to function and to receive the support of its constituent organizations.

The principal product of the Center's program is the incontestable fact that, of all of New York's ghetto areas, Bedford-Stuyvesant is now generally recognized as being the one most ready to receive a "Model Cities" program. In his report on the need for reorganization of the City's housing, planning, and renewal functions, Edward J. Logue cited the Central Brooklyn Coordinating Council as a model of responsible citizen participation, and credited its activities with achieving the impressive political support for the launching of meaningful action programs which currently exists. The recent establishment in Bedford-Stuyvesant of the country's first community-based and locally controlled non-profit Development Corporation, and the commitment to its success of such eminent figures as Senators Robert F. Kennedy and Jacob K. Javits, Mayor John V. Lindsay, and some of the top leaders of America's business community can be directly traced to the quiet spadework done over many frustrating months by the staff of the Central Brooklyn Coordinating Council with the Center's active assistance.

Among the other useful lessons are the following:

#### 1. Constancy of Purpose

Such success as the Center may have had is due primarily to its early adoption of specific broad-ranging and exciting, yet entirely attainable, goals and to its unflinching championing of these same goals despite the ever present temptation to "settle for less and get going". Its uncompromising assertion that nothing but a total renewal and rehabilitation effort can possibly make any difference in the future course of the community's life protected it against the wastage of civic energies which normally follows the attainment of limited goals. Thus, much effort may be expended on the forging of a group actively interested in the development of, say, a local swimming pool. Unless this limited objective is a part of a larger objective, upon its realization the original group falls apart, and any new effort for a new school or park, or housing improvement must be laboriously mounted from scratch. The community's concentration on the broad objective of overall renewal not only did not interfere with, but actually helped the community get a designation of the Fulton Park area as suitable for urban renewal. This demonstrates the effectiveness of community concentration on specific objectives under the general umbrella of a comprehensive improvement program.

#### 2. Comprehensiveness of Goals

In ghetto areas, the purposes of any urban extension program must include the creation of an institutional and governmental framework within which the community's problems can be ultimately solved. By definition, therefore, the effort must be exerted on the broadest possible plane toward the achievement of the fullest possible spectrum of objectives. Any effort which concentrates on a single objective—be it the creation of employment opportunities, or more welfare assistance, or training, or housing—is doomed to fall short of the community's real needs. Pursuit of the objective of rebuilding and rehabilitating the entire community will of necessity con-

front the City's government and its entire body politic with the need to address themselves to the solution of all the other problems as well. This has been the lesson taught by urban renewal, which is generally recognized to have made the greatest contribution to the uncovering of our cities' social ills, and to have forced society to come to grips with them.

#### 3. Resistance to Contractual Relationships

The Center resisted the temptation to follow the example of many foundation-funded urban extension programs, as well as that of various institutes of urban studies, which have attempted to assure continuity of financial support by establishing contractual consultant relationships with local governments. This possible alternative was carefully investigated and was rejected on several compelling grounds. Perhaps the most important of these was the fear that, had the Center permitted a situation to arise where the tenure of its staff would become dependent upon its ability to get more contracts, its character would have had to change to the point where it would have become indistinguishable from a private consultant organization. Based on the confirmation offered by so many extant examples all over the country, nothing would more surely have destroyed the Center's flexibility and ability to innovate than the need to generate paid work.

#### 4. Concentration on Operational, as Against Basic, Research

Nor did the Center find it desirable to engage in extensive research. From the very outset it adopted a position which the University of California (Berkeley) Urban Extension program adopted only after a four-year long experiment.\* Any needed major research can be secured, under contract, from existing agencies already having the necessary capability. The center rejected decisively the temptation to join the rapidly proliferating research-oriented public and quasi-public programs all over the country which so frequently waste enormous amounts of scarce funds on seemingly endless, inapplicable, untestable, and totally useless projects.

The Center was also acutely aware that an action-and service-oriented staff, in the establishment of which it was primarily interested, does not, generally, also constitute a good research staff. The Center itself had the capability of conducting such small operational research projects as it was in a position to undertake. Examples of such problem-solving oriented research are the already mentioned survey of the Stuyvesant Heights area (which was responsible for the Center's initial involvement with the real issues confronting the community) the inventory of vacant lands and buildings and city-owned lands, availability of insurance coverage, prevalence of liquor stores, etc.

#### 5. Rate of Progress

The pace of any program of involvement with local groups cannot be forced—it must be allowed to unfold and grow at its own rate. Normally, this would be the rate at which local groups grasp the totality of the issues confronting them, and can tighten their understanding of the institutional setting in which their problems will have to be solved, and of the true nature of all available tools. The rate of growth

\*In a 1965 report to its supporting foundation, the university wrote as follows:

"The university's basic research is not translated into operational form for government agencies, and research needs of the agencies are not posed in researchable form to the community of scholars in the university . . . The absence of such a linkage has been noticed by many thoughtful scholars. And while the university has many research-oriented centers and institutes, these tend to support the faculty's interest in basic research. Thus, the type of applied research which extension could provide would not conflict with these organizations but, rather, would complement their work and improve the communication between them and the community and its agencies." ("Urban Extension", op. cit.)

of the program will also inevitably depend upon the trust of grass-roots organizations in their technical advisors. To develop such understanding and trust it is essential that technicians should never presume to speak for local agencies. No matter how frustrating, at times, the process may become, local spokesmen must be allowed to speak for themselves. Given a thorough educational program in the background, the Center's experience suggests that it should be possible to develop a substantial body of well-informed opinion in almost any long-established ghetto community in a short time. (The same may of course not be true of concentrations of minority residents with deep seated problems).

Any attempt to force the relationship between residents and advisors or to have the technicians assume the leadership in relations between the local area and the City, is bound to end with the technicians way out front, shouting and shoving, but with no one behind them.

#### 6. Community Organization

The Center also resisted the temptation of "adopting", for long periods of time, leaderless indigenous groups, in the hope that their constant association with technicians would increase their effectiveness to a degree sufficient to enable them to stand on their own feet. This function, it was felt, is primarily one of community organization, which is being discharged well by the able staff of the Central Brooklyn Coordinating Council and other established local organizations. The Center's policy is to deal only with responsible leaders of all bona-fide local organizations. Whether within the ghetto or outside, there can be no organization and no effective action without leaders, and it is axiomatic that well informed leaders can lead more effectively, and thereby strengthen the influence of their organizations vis-a-vis the rest of the world, and their own influence within their organizations. The emergence of strong leaders, democratically elected and responsive to their constituencies, is essential to the achievement of social stability; and social stability, in turn, is indispensable to the eventual constructive unfolding of the needed massive community-wide improvement program, particularly when it is realized that, of necessity, such a program will have to develop over a long period of time.

#### 7. Funding

If a program is to grow at all under the circumstances described above, it is essential that its funding not dry up just at the moment when some of its major efforts are about to bear fruit. Unfortunately, most programs funded by foundations feel that their continued support depends upon their ability to produce quick headline-making results. On the contrary, the experience of the Pratt Center for Community Improvement proves the desirability of careful and deliberate program development. For best results, it would thus seem that the purposes of a grant should be spelled out as flexibly as possible, with the rate of expenditure left entirely up to its administrators. To be specific, in round figures the Pratt program cost only \$10,000 in its first year, \$30,000 in its second, \$65,000 in its third, and \$80,000 in its fourth year (the last two years' budgets included \$30,000 for the development of the two vest-pocket parks and \$10,000 for a Leadership Training Program for which a special grant was obtained by the Center under the terms of Title I of the Higher Education Act of 1965). Had its staff felt under pressure to spend as much as one-third of its initial \$94,000 three-year funding during the first year, it might have generated a headline or two, but most of the expended funds would have been wasted, and any base for future operations so hurriedly established would have been much less effective.

#### 8. Role in Community Conflict

The Center's staff also carefully evaluated the pros and cons of direct engagement in community conflict, and it concluded that its role should be strictly limited to that of technicians, instructors, and staff assistants to responsible local groups. The most useful product of its activities should be the achievement of an equality of knowledge between local leaders and City representatives in regard to all issues under discussion. It is only when in possession of such knowledge that local people can engage successfully in direct confrontations with the bureaucracy and elected officialdom across a negotiating table rather than in the streets. In most instances, direct grass-roots action is not centered on complex issues — it doesn't take great housing expertise to enable one to bring dead rats to City Hall and dump them on the Mayor's desk! Since technical advice in such cases would have been superfluous, direct involvement by the staff of the Center in such activities would have been frankly political. In this connection it is important to note that it is precisely the Center's ability to maintain a totally non-partisan, non-political stance throughout its four year existence that invested it with such effectiveness as it may possess.

#### 9. Political Neutrality

This latter statement should not be interpreted to mean that the Center is oblivious to the political implications of its program, actions, pronouncements, and advice. On the contrary, without being in any way partisan, the timing of every one of its moves was carefully weighed in relation to the prevailing political situation, and to its possible impact on events. Thus, the second annual community-wide conference of the Central Brooklyn Coordinating Council on the subject of Housing and Urban Renewal was scheduled for the Saturday before the 1965 New York mayoralty contest, which was held the following Tuesday. As usual, the polls had forecast victory by both sides, but all agreed that the victory margin would be small, and that the minority vote would count very heavily in the balance. The prospect of addressing an assembly of some 600-700 vocal and reasonably aroused community leaders in a key area was seized by a number of political leaders of both parties and it can truthfully be said that this conference was the starting point of the upward curve in Bedford-Stuyvesant's destiny.

#### 10. Improved Communication

One of the most useful observations developed by the Center is that, in many cases, the lack of responsiveness on the part of the governmental bureaucracy to legitimate demands from the grass roots is due to the fact that these demands are not presented in language which the bureaucrats are capable of understanding. The administration of the increasingly more complex municipal programs is so bound up with statutory requirements and administrative regulations (not to speak of the ever-present political considerations) that, unless the demands are presented in a way which will show the respondent how he can justify their being granted, he will tend to deny them. One of the Center's principal contributions in this regard was its ability to assist the community to state its case cogently and effectively, and thereby to establish that minimal level of communication with the bureaucracy which is indispensable to constructive interaction.

#### 11. The Center and the Institute

The final observations regarding the Pratt Center for Community Improvement deal with its position within the Institute and its relationship to the other departments. The Center is lodged within the Department of City and Regional Planning, an almost

autonomous part of the School of Architecture. Its position in the Institute is not the result of any careful premeditation; rather, it is a reflection of the fact that the people with the relevant kind of motivation, and who therefore took the initiative toward its establishment, happened to be connected with that Department. The motivation of the administrators of a heavily service-oriented program, such as any kind of urban extension work must be if it is to have any meaning, is clearly crucial to its success. The theoretical "correctness" of its location within the university structure would seem to be entirely secondary.

Secondly, the Center's freedom of any entangling urban ideologies enabled its staff to move rapidly and flexibly, and thus capitalize on all opportunities as they arose. In socially dynamic times, institutions, no less than men, must be able to take tides in their affairs "at the flood", if, to paraphrase the poet, all the voyage of their remaining lives is not to be bound in "shallows and in miseries". This the Center, within the severe limitations of its resources, was able to do.

Thirdly, the Center's impact upon the university is of less consequence than its ability to draw upon it for assistance. Pratt Institute does not have a full complement of university offerings, but to the extent that relevant programs do exist in other departments, the Center has been able to secure their total cooperation. The Center's activities have been aided by members of the Pratt Youth Corps (organized under the auspices of Professor Joseph Garai, of the School of Humanities and Social Science) and it has had a close relationship with the Department of Design in the School of Architecture. The Art School has contributed volunteers who have worked in tutorial and arts and crafts programs, painted murals in the two vest-pocket parks, etc. The Department of Interior Design has developed a proposal for the furnishing of low-rent apartments with tasteful furnishings within the means of low-income families. And, above all, the President's office has been most helpful at all times. In the few instances in which the Center found lack of interest in anything other than scholarship, research, or professional association, it turned for assistance to where the need for action is recognized along with the usefulness of the traditional academic concerns.

The presence of the Center in the Department of City and Regional Planning has strengthened the Department's original determination to attempt to produce action-oriented professionals, eager to do battle on whatever front their presence will contribute to the development of an environment in which the Nation's urban masses will be more likely to live the good life than they are able to now. Increasingly, students have devoted time to Center-related projects.\* In the future, it is expected that such work will become required of all students. Given adequate resources, the Department also hopes to initiate a Community Development orientation to supplement its traditional Master of Urban Planning degree program, and to seek out students among Negro and Puerto Rican college graduates who, by reason of discrimination or lack of self-confidence, are employed in positions which fail to develop their full ability. Trained in community development, housing, planning, and urban renewal theory and techniques, they will hopefully be able to assume key leadership roles in the total rebuilding and rehabilitation of their ghetto communities — a goal to which the Pratt Center for Community Improvement is single-mindedly dedicated.

\*Significant renewal studies were developed for Coney Island and Flatbush. The latter was in large measure responsible for the establishment of the Flatbush Community Council.

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