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INTEGRATED COOPERATION WITHIN A GRASS-ROOTS MOVEMENT: THE CLASS EMPHASIS

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THE ISOLATED WORKING CLASS AND RACIALLY INTEGRATED COOPERATION

Under what conditions is it possible for members of different racial groups to cooperate in an integrated sense to build a successful, working class, community-based, mutual benefits association -- one with the long-term intent of organizing workplaces where mutual-benefits association members happen to work? Can this inter-racial cooperation occur at all levels of the organization? Given this long-term possibility of unionization, an end product not too different from an association-union recently achieved by Caesar Chavez's "NFWA-UFWOC",¹ what are the initial organizational prerequisites for successfully bringing together blacks, whites, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans and others within these local associations?

By integrated cooperation is meant:

1. Openness on membership to all racial (and ethnic) groups.
2. Racial representation at all levels of the association in numbers proportionate to racial numerical standing within the working class sector of the community.
3. Mutually helpful relations among members of the association.
4. The acceptance of a common set of associational norms, beliefs, and values by group members -- in other words, no one set of rules, prescriptions, and evaluating criteria for one particular racial group, a second set for another racial group, and so on. The formula is clear: all races are defined as they are treated -- the same.

In our time this kind of inter-racial cooperation within the context of a mutual-benefits association would seem to occur most successfully during moments of economic depression. And for many "impacted" communities the time is now. For many are in fact down and out in Philadelphia, New Brunswick, Newark, and Ashland, Oregon, not to mention Santa Cruz, Oakland and Rochester, New York.

THAT PARTICULAR KIND OF ORGANIZATION

Now it is easy for an organization to appear in such communities. Organization come and go by the thousands every year in America. The working class can testify to that dismal reality. But it is something unusual for organizations to appear, to sink roots into the community, and to stay. For decadal longevity to happen, certain organizational prerequisites seem necessary:²

1. A complete independence from governmental subsidy -- for what the government can bankroll it can destroy -- at a moment's notice. In light of the associational dissolutions of the 1960's and the first half of the 1970's, there is no need to belabor this point.

2. There must be an "integration-cooperation" policy of the kind specified in the second paragraph of this paper.

3. But to achieve a practice consonant with this policy and to maintain it, there must exist a "supply system", i.e. a continuous flow of free resources obtained from the community and a mutual-sharing of these subsistence items among staff members -- both cadre and key volunteers. This point can not be overstressed. The local full-time organizers must obtain food, clothes, shelter, money and time-commitments as donations. They must get much of this material from the very ones they organize (plus the more affluent working class and middle class sympathizers). The organized thereby inadvertently create a modicum of control from below. For they can withdraw their material props if the association's leadership gets too far out of line with the rank-and-file's expectations.

What the organizers thereby obtain they must share among themselves. Not too surprisingly, they generally survive at a minimal subsistence, a level of intake nonetheless consistent with the egalitarian mood of the association's organizers, volunteers, and rank-and-file members, and with the level of living of the poorer of the latter.

4. To emphasize the importance of sharing meagre resources, there must be a practice of minimizing the amount of dues. This policy is consistent with the incomes of many people found within not only the isolated working class, where luxury spending is at a minimum during economic depressions, but within the non-isolated working class itself, for its members also find their real take-home earnings shrinking during these perilous moments.

5. There should exist a practice of catholicity of taste on recruitment. There must be a marked predisposition on the part of the association to garner dissatisfied drifters, among others, in part because they are both numerous and ready to join, and in part because a surprisingly large number of these persons were willing to participate in inter-racial cooperation within local associations. This is so since they have associated over the years with a wide variety of racial groups in many work settings, thereby making these workmen predisposed to interact within a racially-pluralistic working class association in the here and now so long as such efforts beget short-term, positive, economic results. Members of different racial groups will be willing to put up with each other so long as they have tangible indications that their associational activity is paying off. Workers are pragmatists.

6. There must be a clear-cut chain of command so that policies of the organization are in fact (a) both visible and hence accountable as well as (b) carried out to deliver concrete benefits — thereby locking together within the experiences of members both clarity of hierarchy and visibility of improved well-being.

7. To get and keep persons from all racial groups within the working class there should be a practice and policy of "open strategy and closed discipline". Another way of putting it is that the working class will not tolerate sectarian narrowness: a closed dogma-strategy on what to do. Distrustful of abstractions for good historical reasons, workers often do not have patience with the intellectual hair-splitting at the heart of sectarian thought. Hence, they do not like it. In fact, they will leave the association rather than put up with sectarian discussions. Any organizer will tell you that the arid distinctions that tickle the toes of the intellectuals become transparently both obscurantist and divisive in the eyes of the working class. Organizers have found that should political sectarianism appear, unless it is removed post haste, working class people will simply drop out, thereby wrecking the experiment in working class inter-racial cooperation.

What workmen of all races will accept is a pragmatic openness on strategic and actual possibilities. What they will enjoy is participation in the discussion of alternative concrete courses of action. This does not mean that they will insist on grass-roots control of the association on all matters. They will not necessarily demand that they have the final say on what is to be the correct strategy, for they know from their experiences both the importance of efficient hierarchy and the need to fall back upon the acumen of tested top leadership — the talented, bright and experienced — for the final say on what to do. And here there is a qualifier, a real kicker. Given the authoritative decision making at the top and as a result the absence of popular democratic decision making at the bottom of the association, what will emerge at the grass-roots will be an informal consensus on what is wrong and right, an agreement which cross-cuts racial group lines. And if that consensus proves consistent with the line ultimately adopted by the upper echelons of the organization, the rank-and-file will lock-step with others irrespective of racial group membership. And together they will struggle to survive and to improve. On the other hand, if the grass-roots consensus recurrently runs counter to decisions made at the top, it will soon find itself without a base, and the inter-racial cooperation will go out the window.

8. To combat the inevitably real and imagined racism within any group in this country, there must be a clear-cut policy on where to step on matters of racism:

- (a) Put your best foot forward. There must be a deliberate emphasis

on placing members of all racial groups in every conceivable kind of setting. But more than that, when a group known to be sympathetic but racially prejudiced wishes to work with the association in question, its leadership in turn must refuse to pander to racism, but instead send the prejudiced group a speaker or organizer, whatever the role to be filled, who both belongs to the proletarianized ethnic group in question and who in every way exudes an excellence well beyond common standards of competence. The association thereby undermines through action, rather than do-good and hopelessly inconsequential idealistic preaching, the popular stereotypes held by persons to be influenced.

(b) There must be a deliberate effort to combat all forms of nationalism. For nationalism is continuously and correctly defined by many as anathema to the goals of the class-based organization.³

(c) Avoid participation in partisan political campaigns. When racially mixed working class groups enter formal politics, they join an activity which deals out greater rewards to some racial groups than others. This process engenders envy and jealousy among racial groups, especially those that have the least of what there is to get. Envy and related jealousy subsequently promote conflict within the association. There is no way to avoid this once the association has locked itself into pluralistic politics. To avoid this alternative the association must not only argue against the involvement in local partisan politics but at the same time make clear to its membership that little has been lost by abstention. For the amount of patronage the upper and middle classes divvy up to the favored proletarian racial groups is both meagre and short-term.

(d) Emphasize the propertied roots of racism. The upper classes have historically both cultivated racism and manipulated its outcomes to maximize their propertied interests. That being the case, the benefits association must continuously strive to define racial discord as having its ultimate roots in private ownership of property -- and to eschew both human nature and cultural justifications of racism as providing ultimate explanations.

There is plausible class-property accounting on the origins and reinforcement of racism. A good deal of historical material supports assertions which link upper class profit-accumulation of capital to proffered racism. Therefore to embrace this class-world hypothesis on racism is to accept a myth with substance, and by accepting this core-explanation, one can provide a formula acceptable to all group members. Indeed, this class-explanation on racism in every way promotes class solidarity across racial lines, since the upper and middle class culprits in question are beyond the pale of the mutual-benefits association.

To sum up, the class explanation unites the mottled many against the

upper class few. The cultural and human nature arguments divide the many amongst themselves as they deal with the united few. To pursue explanation of racism either through the cultural or human nature argument is to sanction a line of reasoning which would thereby allow the continuation of the few's exploitative and oppressive practices. Also, it's bad social science.

What are the bases for these propositions? Actually, there is little evidential "underpinning". Rather, the empirical evidence assumes the quality of shot-gun patterns from various historical periods. The evidence is scattered. Some of the general ideas are derived from the 1960's experiences of Saul Alinsky,⁴ (The Chicago Woodlawn Organization and the essentially California-based Community Service Organization) plus the earlier Chicago (late 1930's, early 1940's) Back-Of-The-Yards Movement. It in turn had its origins in the late 1930's efforts of Alinsky, the Catholic Church (especially Bishop Sheil) and the United Packinghouse Workers of America, C.I.O.⁵

Some of the general ideas advanced have been abstracted from what has happened within the United Farm Workers Union, A.F.L.-C.I.O. (U.F.W.) and its organic predecessor, the National Farm Workers Association (N.F.W.A.) an interesting combination of a benefits association and labor union. The N.F.W.A. began as a benefits association and later added the labor union dimension.

Interestingly, Caesar Chavez, the present leader of the U.F.W., was with C.S.O. just prior to his leaving to organize the N.F.W.A. during the early 1960's.⁶ Thus the descent line of the U.F.W. goes back ultimately to the Chicago packinghouse workers of forty years ago.

A RECENT SUCCESS

Most recently a lineage-descendant of the United Farm Workers has erupted in communities such as New Brunswick, New Jersey. There the Eastern Service Workers Association (E.S.W.A.), a mutual-benefits association in many ways like Chavez's National Farm Worker's Association (Delano, 1961-64), began its organizational activities in March, 1975. Like the U.F.W., it shared many of the general qualities cited as necessary for the construction of a successful grass roots struggle organization organized along inter-racial lines:

* It has a \$100 per month store-front set up with approximately 500 members, plus their families.

* It explicitly avoids taking money from government agencies.

* It is open to all workers living in the community, employed or unemployed. Most members, insofar as they do work, tend to move from job to job and occupation to occupation; thus, the membership assumes a "roving" or transient character. Many are unemployed during the current depression. The emphasis is on service workers, but no worker who wants to join is excluded.

* Its membership is overwhelmingly black and Puerto Rican, although there is a noticeable minority of whites, thereby reflecting the racial composition of neighborhoods canvassed and organized. At the time of this writing, the top leadership of eleven full-time organizers consists of 2 whites, 1 black, 1 Latin, and 1 Eurasian (August, 1976).

* Members of all races do in fact cooperate within the organization as the membership attempts to obtain various services: a benefits program has been set up encompassing free emergency food and clothing, a legal advice clinic, a welfare rights clinic, tenant's advice, a referral service for a variety of problems members may have, and a monthly newsletter containing information of interest to the membership.

* The full-time organizers depend upon the "supply system" for their room and board and a (less than five dollars per week) allowance. Their food, clothes and money comes directly from the community, in the form of donations sought and dues paid.

* The dues are minimal: sixty-two cents per family per month. They are voluntary; if a person can't afford to pay, it isn't required.

* There is an extremely clear-cut local chain of command. The full-time organizers are definitely in charge; they are dedicated, seven day a week people, available any hour of the day or night. Below them are the various volunteers and the less active membership.

* Alternate strategies on who to recruit, where to seek membership, tactics to be used (such as whether to set up block captains in neighborhoods canvassed) are fully debated before a decision is made by the leadership.

* Once a decision is made, such as one of the setting up of block captains within neighborhoods, resources are systematically organized to make block captains and meetings effective. There is no waffling on what to do once the decision is set.

* The organization directs persons of minority group membership into all settings, including sending their best-trained into situations where the group constraints on racist folkways are exceedingly binding -- more precisely, black and Spanish speaking organizers do go into and attempt to seek support of all-white groups in all-white neighborhoods, and in New Jersey that is walking straight down the barrel of racism.

* The organization eschews nationalism, but instead educates its members against its acceptance, always pointing in practice to the class quality of the community obstacles to be overcome. At the same time, the organization is fully aware of, as it combats, the class-racism of domestic and overseas colonialism. The solution to on-the-scene class-racial exploitation and oppression, however, is defined in class terms.

Here as elsewhere, as the historically minded may have noticed, it can be seen that the E.S.W.A. closely resembled the Industrial Workers of the World (I.W.W.).⁸ However, unlike the I.W.W. the E.S.W.A. deliberately eschews publicity. Further, it shies away from premature direct action. It does not attempt to organize at the workplace until it has first brought people together within their neighborhoods. The E.S.W.A. foregoes attempts to organize industrial unions, but rather moves to organize whole stratum—those working class people located in entire residential districts who move from one low paid job to the next, from job into unemployment, from work to welfare. The membership in turn directly participates through the organizational center --this is no loosely coordinated, hydra-headed community organization. Again, unlike the I.W.W., E.S.W.A. does not organize dual unions. The E.S.W.A. does not enter into jurisdictional fights with groups already organized — it deliberately stays away from competition with other unions: instead it argues that there are millions of unorganized/but organizeable to be brought together. Perhaps most importantly, the E.S.W.A. places little or no faith in charismatic leadership (no Haywoods, Trescas or Flynns).⁹ Rather it places great emphasis on the development and maintenance of affectional bonds connecting people within and amongst levels of the organization. Finally, the E.S.W.A. organizes its activities in terms of a systems model, thereby taking advantage of the known theory and methodology so as to create a remarkably efficient organization. This the I.W.W. never was.

HOW DO FOLKS GET ALONG?

What is the incidence of inter-racial cooperation? It would appear that in fact there is a plentitude of such integrated cooperation. Members of diverse racial groups can be seen working in the office. House meetings are truly inter-racial, with coffee and cake, acquaintance and genuine affection. Parties such as Halloween festivities at the association headquarters are organized by the membership for children and adults tired of their children encountering razor-bladed apples and other fruits and nuts of the evening. Members go to local merchants and solicit food and other kinds of support for such occasions. For example, a local magician donated his services for the Halloween party. And a well-known hamburger chain outlet gave E.S.W.A. five dozen hamburgers for the kiddies' party. Never mind that they were reheated at the time of eating, thus does the E.S.W.A. obtain

help and at the same time build its periphery. In this kind of setting, cultural nationalism just does not raise its head. People learn that they have one thing in common -- their near-poverty, their working-class way of life, and their tiny but growing influence over their own lives, with this new but added strength derived from their inter-racial organization.

Nonetheless, there are certain inter-racial problems. Fortunately, they do not seriously impede the workings of the organization. Still, they are worthy of note:

1. Difficulty in recruiting non-white full-time organizers. This situation occurs in part because of the high labor market demand for skilled non-white, especially male, organizers. Government and private agencies seek such persons, recruit them, and pay them good salaries. That being the case, even when such persons are recruited to E.S.W.A., it is hard to keep them.

2. Related to this question is the problem of recruiting non-whites and poor working class whites as non-salaried volunteers. Some enter and then leave E.S.W.A. as volunteers because they can ill-afford to give their time gratis over an extended period of time to the organization. Often their familial responsibilities are heavy. This kind of limitation has had a marked effect, for example, on the organization's ability to hold young black women who have small children. They just obtain income from a full-time job since other funding sources such as parents simply are not available, and child-care duties preoccupy them during hours away from the job.

3. Although the original thrust was to organize low paid service workers (and especially domestic and attendant care workers), the E.S.W.A. discovered an exceedingly high rate of unemployment among such workers. Hence, with three-quarters of those canvassed out of work, the E.S.W.A. found itself in a situation of organizing the unemployed. Given this circumstance, how a second-stage worksite organizing goal is to be realized is unclear. In the meantime, and now bereft of this original goal, the organization seems presently without a clear thrust. Nonetheless, the association persists as a mutual-benefits association, recruiting new members, setting up block captains and holding local meetings in areas organized, and working to steadily expand the benefits program to assist the employed and unemployed members in fulfilling their day-to-day needs. And there is a structural basis for progress. A strong organization is being built which relates to its members needs; as common problems become more clearly defined, there is an organizational basis for a concerted push to seek long-term solutions.

CONCLUSIONS

Take a step into the masses? That recommendation must carry with it a specification on what to do within working class communities torn by inter-racial animosities. Given this ugly secondary contradiction, how can grass-roots groups achieve inter-racial cooperation as both workers and organizers? There are no sure formulas. However, there would appear to be helpful experience from our recent past: the Chicago efforts of TWO's Alinsky and the Packinghouse workers March, the California struggles directed by Chavez, the I.W.W. battles waged by the Flynn's, Heywoods, and Trescas in the Patersons, Philadelphias, Shreveports and Stocktons, these leaders, these settings, plus the active rank-and-file strugglers themselves. They have left us a legacy, and intellectual inheritance, a package of ideas on what to do to organize a polyethnic working class. The successes and failures of these movements have taught us much on how to minimize abrasive relations within our multi-tribal working class communities. Precisely because of the historic efforts of these working class movements, the Eastern Service Workers Association of New Brunswick, New Jersey can today formulate basic propositions on what to do. We have attempted to summarize the very principles which have served as its guide. We pray for their generality and seek their modification.

FOOTNOTES

1. The United Farm Workers (A.F.L.-C.I.O.) has its genesis in the National Farm Workers Association set up by Chavez in the early 1960's after he left the ill-fated Community Service Organization (C.S.O.) organizing drive in east Los Angeles—where C.S.O. had been focusing on non-point-of-production issues amongst the Chicano population. Chavez established the N.F.W.A. among Chicano farm workers resident in and around Delano. It was essentially a benefits association with the long-term hope of becoming a union. But first Chavez felt it would be necessary to organize the Chicano community around things such as burial benefits and a gas station co-op. In September, 1965, several weeks after Larry Itliong and the Filipino-based Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (A.W.O.C.), an A.F.L.-C.I.O. spin-off, struck some of the major vineyards in and around Delano, the Filipinos sought and obtained the striking support of Chavez and the N.F.W.A., even though he felt that it was too early for the young and weak N.F.W.A. to involve itself in a strike. Subsequently, A.W.O.C. and N.F.W.A. set up one strike organization, A.W.O.C.-N.F.W.A. Shortly thereafter both became formally part of the A.F.L.-C.I.O. At approximately the same time the A.W.O.C. and N.F.W.A. amalgamated and Chavez emerged as the leader of the U.F.W.O.C., a pro-forma A.F.L.-C.I.O. organizing committee, under the regional leadership of Bill Kershner and in receipt of \$10,000 a month subsidy from the A.F.L.-C.I.O.

What might well be fascinating to examine is the degree to which the U.F.W. ~~union~~ has maintained and/or discarded its benefits program.

2. These organizational prerequisites appear to be best met in an "isolated working class community", to borrow a term suggested by Clark Kerr and Abraham Siegel in "The Interindustry Propensity to Strike--An International Comparison" (found in Arthur Kornhauser, Robert Dubin and Arthur M. Ross' Industrial Conflict). There they refer to the Isolated Mass:

"The miners, sailors, the longshoremen, the loggers, and, to a much lesser extent, the textile workers form isolated masses, almost a 'race apart'. They live in their own separate communities: the coal patch, the ship, the waterfront district, the logging camp, the textile towns (some of these communities, such as the coal towns, are geographically isolated, while others, such as waterfront districts, are socially isolated within metropolitan communities). There are few neutrals in them to mediate the conflicts and dilute the mass. All people have grievances, but what is important is that the members of each of these groups, have the same grievances: industrial hazards or severe depression unemployment or bad living conditions (which seem additionally evil because they are supplied by the employer), or low wages or intermittent work. And here is a case where the totality of common grievances, after they have been verbally shared, may be greater than the sum of the individual

parts. The employees form a largely homogeneous undifferentiated mass—they all do about the same work and have about the same experiences. Here you do not have the occupational stratification of the metal or building crafts, of the hotel or restaurant, or of the government bureau." (pp. 192-193)

We would argue that many working class residential districts come to share a very similar kind of homogeneity, but rather than calling it a mass, thereby suggesting that it is without organization or potentially without class organization, we use the term isolated working class.

In this formulation of "isolated working class community" we are dependent upon not only the writings of Kerr and Siegel but the prior and perhaps more important views of Marx. He expressed them in his comparison of spatially scattered but poverty stricken peasants with the populationally more dense working class. See his "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte" reproduced in part in Lewis Coser and Bernard Rosenberg, eds., Sociological Theory: A Book of Readings (New York: Macmillan Co., 1975), p. 374 in particular.

3. Nationalism can be manipulated by rulers against the ruled. The British colonialists were masters at employing tertius gaudens within their colonies, as in their relations with India's Hindus and Muslims. Pertinent in understanding these relations are the definitions advanced by Georg Simmel in his The Sociology of Georg Simmel (London: The Free Press, of Glencoe, Collier-Macmillan Limited, 1964).

Fascinating in his definition of tertius gaudens, literally, "the third who enjoys":

"I will only mention two forms of the tertius gaudens in which the interaction within the triad does not emerge very distinctly; and here we are interested in its more typical formations. In these two, the essential characteristic is rather a certain passivity, either of the two engaged in the conflict or of the tertius (third element, party, or person). The advantage of the tertius may result from the fact that the remaining two hold each other in check, and he can make a gain which one of the two would otherwise deny him. The discord here only effectuates a paralyzation of forces which, if they only could, would strike against him. The situation thus really suspends interaction among the three elements, instead of fomenting it, although it is certainly, nonetheless, of the most distinct consequences for all of them. The case in which this situation is brought about on purpose will be discussed in connection with the next type of configuration among three elements. Meanwhile, the second form appears when the tertius gains an advantage

only because action by one of the two conflicting parties brings it about for its own purposes -- the tertius does not need to take the initiative. A case in point are the benefits and promotions which a party bestows upon him only in order to offend its adversary. Thus, the English laws for the protection of labor originally derived, in part at least, from the rancor of the Tories against liberal manufacturers. Various charitable actions that result from competition for popularity also belong here. Strangely enough, it is a particularly petty and mean attitude that befriends a third element for the sake of annoying a second: indifference to the moral autonomy of altruism cannot appear more sharply than in this exploitation of altruism. And it is doubly significant that the purpose of annoying one's adversary can be achieved by favoring either one's friend or one's enemy." (pp. 154-55)

In the case of divida et impera, Simmel observed that it was in fact subsumed by tertius gaudens:

"The previously discussed combinations of three elements were characterized by an existing or emerging conflict between two, from which the third drew his advantage. One particular variety of this combination must now be considered separately, although in reality it is not always clearly delimited against other types. The distinguishing nuance consists in the fact that the third element intentionally produces the conflict in order to gain a dominating position. Here too, however, we must preface the treatment of this constellation by pointing out that the number three is merely the minimum number of elements that are necessary for this formation, and that it may thus serve as the simplest schema. Its outline is that initially two elements are united or mutually dependent in regard to a third, and that this third element knows how to put the forces combined against him into action against one another. The outcome is that the two either keep each other balanced so that he, who is not interfered with by either, can pursue his advantages; or that they so weaken one another that neither of them can stand up against his superiority." (p. 162)

4. Charles E. Silberman, in his Crisis in Black and White (New York: Random House, 1964). He observed:

"....The Woodlawn Organization, created in late 1960, has become a major factor in that city's life and politics. Indeed, TWO is the most important and the most impressive experiment affecting Negroes anywhere in the United States. It is a living demonstration that Negroes, even those living in the worst sort of slum, can be mobilized to help themselves, and that when they are, neither the Negro community nor the city as a whole can ever be quite the same again. Formation of TWO represents the first instance in which a large broadly representative organization has come into existence in any Negro district in any large American city. The Woodlawn Organization is set up as a federation of other representative groups: some eighty-five or ninety in all, including thirteen churches (virtually all the churches of influence in the community), three businessmen's

associations, and an assortment of block clubs, neighborhood associations, and social groups of one sort or another. All told, the organizations represented in TWO have a membership of about thirty thousand people; some twelve hundred of them attended the organizations second annual convention in May of 1963." (pp. 317-18)

Unfortunately for TWO, it got snarled in the morass associated with taking grants from governmental agencies.

Nonetheless, many of Alinsky's ideas still stand as landmarks on how to organize at the grass-roots, and people like Chavez, who worked with Alinsky's California spin-offs (C.S.O.) during the early 1960's undoubtedly learned a good deal from him. Many of his ideas are to be found in his Reveille for Radicals (New York: Vintage Books, 1969) and his later Rules For Radicals (New York: Vintage Books, 1971) especially his chapter on "Tactics", pp. 126-145.

5. While the union people helped to create the Back-of-the-Yards Movement, it in turn strove to aid in the formation and maintenance of a successful C.I.O. union. This mutually helpful relationship has been described by Theodore V. Purcell, S.J., in his The Worker Speaks His Mind on Company and Union (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953), especially pp. 38-40. Lest we forget what the union and residential district accomplished, we quote Father Purcell at length:

"The BYC (Back-of-the Yards Council) represents the 125,000 people living back-of-the-yards. It is not really an organization but rather a 'title summing up the pooled efforts of the many organizations and groups of the district' --over 185 of them. The Depression, the old nationalist rivalries, juvenile delinquency, all created problems which the people themselves needed to deal with, and in 1939 the Back-of-the -Yards Council created the spark to ignite that self-helping cooperation. A loose organization of all the neighborhood groups, clubs, churches of all faiths and nationalities was formed with Davis Park Director, Josephy Meegan as executive secretary, sociologist Saul Alinsky as technical consultant, and Catholic Bishop Bernard J. Sheil as honorary director.

"Since 1939, the BYC has had a stormy, controversial and productive career. It supported the UPWA in the fighting days of organization during 1939 and 1940. It tangled with the Park District and city political machine -- and won. It struggled with the big Goldblatt Department Store at Ashland and 47th -- and won. It fought a battle for a school-lunch program all the way to Washington. It supported the UPWA in both the 1946 and 1948 strikes. It conducted programs for neighborhood

improvement in the following areas: infant welfare, employment office; nutrition for school children; health, housing (where it campaigned ceaselessly against gross violations of building and zoning codes by careless landlords and the small packers and truckers); traffic safety; youth recreation, delinquency; credit union; cooperation with labor union, local merchants, and so on; and personal counselling. Naturally such a fighting organization made enemies.

"Let us consider briefly the relationship between the Swift-UPWA plant community and the Back-of-the-Yards neighborhoods. In Back-of-the-Yards, the BYC has been an important center of influence, along with the Catholic Church, the unions, the various national organizations such as the Polish National Alliance, the politicians, the schools, and so on. The BYC attempted to marshal all the groups to support the new drive to organize the Yards. It succeeded with most, not all. The Catholic priests of the Back-of-the-Yards along with Auxiliary Bishop of Chicago, Sheil, supported the UPWA practically from the start as a good and necessary organization for their people. Herbert March, former District Director of District One of the UPWA and a member of the National Committee of the Communist Party (who, incidentally, has never concealed his membership in the party) stated in 1945:

'When the UPWA-CIO first tried to organize the stockyard workers, we met with antagonism of all the so-called respectable people, including the Catholic Church... But we kept up the organization drive...The Back of the Yards leaders knew the people were entitled to higher wages and better working conditions. Their people were largely our people. So they mobilized the support of the whole Council behind the union, including the churches. At one of the first meetings (around 1939) it was a priest who presented the resolution that the packing houses should recognize the union and avoid a strike...The Catholic Churches stood behind us in a block...Nobody in the union can say enough about the value of the Back of the Yards...'" (pp. 39-40)

6. Chavez was with C.S.O. for almost a decade, and as West Coast Director set up C.S.O.'s organizations in many Central Valley communities. Subsequently he moved over into organizing the N.F.W.A.
7. The Eastern Service Workers Association is one of the newest members of a small chain of grass-roots organizing drives amongst workers not covered by the National Labor Relations Act (i.e., farm workers, domestic workers and independent contractors). This drive began in 1972 in Suffolk County, Long Island, New York with the Eastern Farm Workers Association (E.F.W.A.). The E.F.W.A. began as a shoe-string mutual-benefits association, but has now succeeded in opening and running a medical clinic for farmworkers based entirely on volunteer support. It has also supported a strike of potato graders

against the I.M. Young Company, which at the time of this writing is attempting to negotiate a settlement.

In 1973, organizers from E.F.W.A. went to California and helped organize the Western Service Workers Association, utilizing principles of organizing derived from the Long Island farm workers' struggles. The Western Service Workers Association now claims some 10,000 members in its three branch offices in Sacramento, Oakland and Santa Cruz.

The California Homemakers Association, a sub-organization of W.S.W.A., consisting of attendant care workers who care for aged or disabled welfare recipients, counts among its successes that it is the first organization in U.S. history to have won the right to bargain collectively for domestic workers.

For an interesting analysis of the California Homemakers, see John L. Erlich's "The Domestic Workers Rebel", The Nation, September 28, 1974, pp. 273-75. Especially pertinent are the following paragraphs:

"The CHA, a legally recognized association, is committed to securing the rights of workers, such as 'domestics, attendant care workers, homemakers and workers in other areas of service work'. The major effort over the year of CHA's existence has been toward organizing and gaining recognition as a bargaining agent for the 1,800 attendants and domestics who provide home care for an estimated 2,400 elderly, blind or disabled welfare recipients in Sacramento County. About 83 per cent are female. Many, perhaps a majority, are heads of households. By any standard, these domestic workers are severely underpaid. Hourly rates, which were in the \$1 to \$1.25 range fifteen or twenty years ago, had advanced to only \$1.65 an hour as late as December 1973. At the moment, CHA claims a membership of 3,000, of whom almost 1,500 are attendant care workers. It is estimated that there are about 5,000 household workers of all kinds in the county, and the goal is to reach most of the 2.5 million workers nationally who provide such services.

"The city of Sacramento has a population of 274,000, about 25 per cent of whom are racial and ethnic minorities -- mainly black, Chicano, Asian and American Indian. There are roughly an equivalent number of whites in families headed by low-wage workers. The county which encompasses the city has about 670,000 residents, and includes 'suburban' areas of both considerable affluence and obvious poverty.

"Located at 3500 Stockton Boulevard in Sacramento, the main office of the association is part of a multinational, multiracial and multilingual working-class neighborhood. While the storefront office has, on occasion, held more than 100 people for a meeting, it is too cold in winter and too hot in summer. All of the furnishings and office equipment have been donated by friends of

the organization. The enthusiastic members and spirited volunteer organizing staff -- old and young, bilingual and multiracial -- are surprisingly reminiscent of the early activists of the civil rights movement...." (p. 273)

8. Most pertinent here is Robert L. Allen, Reluctant Reformers: Racism and Social Reform Movements in the United States (Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1974), especially pp. 191-195. Also pertinent is Philip S. Foner's brilliant Organized Labor and The Black Worker: 1619-1973 (New York: Praeger Publishers, Inc., 1974) especially his comparison of the railroad brotherhoods and the I.W.W., pp. 103-119.

Allen presents a fascinating quote on I.W.W. practice (op. cit., p. 193):

"The lumber workers of Texas and Louisiana organized the Brotherhood of Timber Workers in 1910 with segregated locals and power vested in the white locals. But upon seeking membership in the IWW in 1912 they were told by organizer Bill Haywood to integrate their meetings. According to Spero and Harris, integrated meetings became the policy except in cases where local authorities intimidated black workers into meeting separately. Destroyed by the repression of employers who were determined to block union organizing, the Brotherhood did achieve racial solidarity among not only its own members but also among blacks, Mexicans and foreign whites who were brought in as strikebreakers." (p. 193)

Also useful in this regard are many of the passages found within Joyce L. Kornbluh's Rebel Voices (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1964), especially pp. 65-126, 158-316.

9. This is not to deny the sharpness of the organizing associated with these three leaders. For essays by them, analyses which clearly reflect their organizational genius, see Kornbluh, op. cit., pp. 204-226, especially Elizabeth Gurley Flynn's "The Truth About the Paterson Strike" ibid., pp. 215-226.