

clients interviewed were happy about a definite service performed for them—a job, a referral to LAS for free legal aid. Many clients interviewed explained that they also value the Center has a place to voice complaints and get action . . . as a place for the “little man to voice his opinion.”

Various agencies which have contact with the Center were invited to express opinions on the services offered there. As mentioned before, relationships with most of these agencies have been difficult. With the exception of LAS most agencies were felt to regard the Center as a threat to their status in the community, a duplication of service, or a method of creating more red tape. Also, there was some ill-feeling between traditional agency staff members and the Center Staff because of higher salaries paid under the poverty program.

These poor relationships are being resolved in two ways: (1) by definite and continuing attempts by the Center Staff and Neighborhood Advisory Committee to cooperate with outside agencies (e.g., inter-agency meetings at the Center), and (2) by pressure. This latter method might be illustrated by the incident of a visit to the Welfare Department by one of the more aggressive neighborhood workers. The worker visited the Agency on behalf of a family evicted from its home. He threatened to move their furniture into the Welfare Office unless he received an emergency check for them. They wrote out the check.

#### *10. Community Action*

The history of community action in this area predates the formation of CAA by many years. Peaceful demonstrations and protest meetings to overcome social problems were organized and carried out but positive effects of these efforts were limited to a few isolated problems. Though the leaders of these movements were dedicated and aggressive and a definite need for action existed, a large majority of the poor population was apathetic and did not turn out for the demonstrations. The formation of the Center gave to these leaders a focal space for organizing the community for action. These leaders became in fact the first staff of the Center and their attitudes were incorporated into its program.

The threat of a demonstration to be organized to march in front of an apartment building in need of repairs brought timely CAA intervention. At this point the CAA held negotiations with building code inspectors and landlords to set in motion the machinery for effecting the needed repairs. The march was called off before it began. Since this incident and other related incidents occurred, any advertised action meeting or demonstration of the poor is expected to bring out a host of city officials and other involved persons for attempts to encourage the poor to arbitrate instead of march. Because of the history of community action in this area, city officials are on the alert to any advance warnings of rebellious activity.

An emphasis on containment of activist elements is exhibited by the aforementioned reorganization of the Center by the CAA and the change of Center personnel. Efforts are now channelled into other activities with an emphasis on service and achieving settlements without the use of open pressure. At this time, policy states that Center Staff may not participate openly in demonstrations. In practice, however, a member of the staff may very well be an instigator and organizer of such an activity and not make an actual appearance at the scene of the activity.

Concretely, the changes evident to some extent in the neighborhood served by the Center include: additional street lighting in part of the area, improved housing due to slum landlord response to resident pressure and stricter code enforcement, and summer recreational programs. Officials are optimistic that neighborhood action will function creatively and be devoted more and more to recruiting clients for service to the community. It is possible that the “militant” phase of community action will be assumed by privately-financed organizations as these groups build up in the neighborhood.

#### *11. Participation of the Poor*

CAA Staff members were questioned regarding the manner and effectiveness of the participation of the poor as board members for “their” program. The consensus of opinion indicated that these communication channels are kept open to the poor but they are not often utilized, except by a few aggressive individuals. The opportunity exists via membership on various boards and committees for representatives of the poor to form policy. However, only the more aggressive personalities speak out. Many of the poor sit in meetings and vote but offer no ideas; they say nothing.