

Peaceniks, beatniks and smutniks

WEIRD WARRIORS IN WAR ON POVERTY



A Nation's Business investigation finds all manner of extremists on payrolls of anti-poverty programs

Left-wing radicals are cashing in on the federal government's war on poverty.

They range from members of official anti-poverty policy-making and advisory boards to full-time paid workers on public anti-poverty projects.

Of course, most of the people engaged in the federal anti-poverty crusade are stable and dedicated Americans whose aim is to uplift the nation's poor, not exploit them.

However, radical organizations are being subsidized by your tax dollars in that a federal program pays much of the salaries of young workers hired to promote the organizations' extreme causes.

No one claims that the war on poverty has been captured by communists or new-left student groups who wage a variety of antigovernment campaigns.

But this appears to be the goal of the extremists, just as the communists tried to take control of the labor union movement a generation ago.

Investigation shows, too, that some anti-poverty militants cheerfully work with extreme radicals, handing the extremists the prestige or funds of a federal program and a chance to agitate among the poor for their own ends.

In fact, because of complaints and inquiries from San Francisco, New York, Chicago, Denver and Kansas City, the federal anti-poverty agency, the Office of Economic Opportunity, has now forbidden the hiring of new people suspected of disloyalty to their country, subversion or hostility to the anti-poverty program. But the order did not require the firing of radicals already on the payroll.

In just one of the areas cited, San Francisco, NATION'S BUSINESS examined several activities under the \$1.5 billion anti-poverty program and related work-study program for needy college students.

The findings suggest what could happen across the country under lax policies on the part of the Office of Economic Opportunity and other agencies which share in the running of the many-faceted war on poverty. Items:

- In San Francisco, a member of an official advisory board in the city program is John Ross of the Progressive Labor Party, which the FBI calls a communist group with allegiance to Red China.

Using his position as a board member, he sought to undermine the city's program to help the poor in a pamphlet entitled "The Million Dollar Bribe," calling it a plot

to buy off or intimidate militant leaders of the poor.

- A member of the Berkeley anti-poverty board, Howard Harowitz, is a former member of a W.E.B. DuBois club. FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover calls the DuBois clubs "communist - spawned." Attorney General Nicholas de B. Katzenbach has petitioned the Subversive Activities Control Board to declare the clubs subversive.

Mr. Harowitz told NATION'S BUSINESS he resigned only because he left college, adding: "I don't have any basic disagreement with them."

- In nearby Richmond, Calif., William Callison, who concedes former membership in the left-wing May 2 Movement, is employed part-time as a community organizer of the poor under the federal work-study program.

The government's work-study program was created under the anti-poverty office to provide jobs for needy college students on campus or in nonprofit institutions working off campus "in the public interest."

The FBI describes the May 2 Movement as the Progressive Labor Party's "youth front."

- Another work-study organizer is Denis Mosgofian, a leader of the Peace/Rights Organizing Committee, an outgrowth of the anti-war radical Vietnam Day Committee.

- Down the coastline in Santa Clara County, there are reliable reports that left-wingers, including suspected onetime communists, worked successfully to elect a power bloc to control the local Economic Oppor-

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tunity Council, the local agency for the poor.

Congressman Charles Gubser, who represents the district, has demanded an investigation of a "take-over by left-wing extremists, the type who are always around to use every honest social program as a vehicle to build their own power and prestige."

- A lack of screening of students and direction of the federal work-study program is suggested by the activities of some participants. A work-study youth at San Jose State College, Emitt Wallace, 23, penned a filthy poem, "Magna Cum Lyndon," attacking U. S. policy in Viet Nam.

Soon afterward, young Wallace shared a platform with Terence Hallinan, national secretary of the DuBois clubs, in a campus program sponsored by the young radical Students for a Democratic Society.

Wallace's obscene poem appeared in an off-campus student publication whose literary editor was John Hansen, 24, a work-study employee last summer for the Santa Clara Boy Scout Council.

Both the college and the U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare's Office of Education, which is responsible for the work-study program since enactment of the Higher Education Act of 1965, say there is no law or regulation barring antigovernment acts by participants.

- Back in the Bay area, an array of groups opposing the U. S. Viet Nam policy is subsidized through payment of the work-study staff as the Berkeley office of "Turn Toward Peace," an organization which does publishing and mailing chores and handles program activities for some 65 affiliated organizations.

TTP includes many pacifist groups which disagree violently among themselves over specific policies.

Its executive committee includes

leaders of the Students for a Democratic Society—a top official of which journeyed to Hanoi with left-leaning Yale professor Staughton Lynd and Herbert Aptheker, top Marxist theoretician in the U. S. The executive committee also includes leaders of the pacifist National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy (SANE) and the War Resisters League.

Turn Toward Peace brought to the University of California's Berkeley campus Bayard Rustin, leftist civil rights leader and executive director of the War Resisters League, for a program on civil disobedience.

Pressure on business

Literature distributed at the TTP center includes a pamphlet of the Northern California War Resisters League, which outlines a campaign to identify businesses with defense contracts, urge them to get out of war work and apply "direct action" where persuasion fails.

Other work-study projects are likely to raise eyebrows.

In Berkeley, your tax dollars subsidize students working at a private school run by one Betty Halpern, who refused to tell the House Un-American Activities Committee in 1960 whether she was or had been a communist.

Also in Berkeley, a lawyer, Mrs. James Fenton Wood, employs a few work-study researchers indexing legal documents in a private so-called civil liberties library.

Mrs. Wood's husband pleaded the Fifth Amendment against self-incrimination when, testifying before the House Un-American Activities Committee, he was asked if he was a communist.

The city of Oakland deserves a closer look. There student radicals—some subsidized by federal tax funds—are exploiting the willingness of idealists to work with anyone who claims to seek worthwhile objectives.

A leader in this campaign is Mark

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continued

Comfort, 32-year-old agitator with a record of violence and public identification with groups the FBI calls communist fronts. Until recently he was a paid anti-poverty staff man.

Here the federal anti-poverty effort is being harassed by students and their allies. They charge that tax money shouldn't be spent on Viet Nam but on the poor. They are using this theme in a drive for political power and to unseat the local Congressman.

A student-backed group on the Oakland poverty council threatened recently to withdraw from the official program and become a rival claimant for Office of Economic Opportunity funding.

Dr. Norvel Smith, the council's staff director, bemoans "mass infiltration" from the Berkeley campus. He told NATION'S BUSINESS that the radical student Vietnam Day Committee there is out to punish the city for mobilizing police to prevent a mass march from Berkeley to Oakland designed to tie up the Oakland Army terminal, a major port of embarkation for Viet Nam-bound troops.

Dr. Smith, a Negro, blasts the students as "white colonials" who, he says, are trying to discredit the local poverty board and middle-class Negro leadership.

"It's clear to me that a lot of these groups, which may include some well-meaning liberals enchanted with the idea of starting some mild sort of social revolution, have become part of the whole Vietnam Day Committee movement. They don't want to change the system," Dr. Smith says of the students, "they want to knock it over."

And who are the students? "I sense that an awful lot of radical students are being subsidized by the work-study program—through the university."

When he attends neighborhood meetings held for the poor, Dr. Smith said, he finds them stacked with outside agitators, some of whom identify themselves as members of the Socialist Workers Party. Checking up, he found some were on work-study projects.

A university source indirectly confirmed this participation, acknowledging that the work-study program does generate "competition" with other anti-poverty efforts in Oakland.

Significantly, a number of those

attacking the Oakland poverty program show up in league with Mark Comfort, who has openly worked with DuBois club forces and the Progressive Labor Party.

Until recently he was working as a \$5 an hour supervisor supposedly teaching job skills to poor youths under the federal Office of Economic Opportunity's Neighborhood Youth Corps. The program was run by the Alameda County Central Labor Council.

Youth Corps official jailed

The council couldn't care less about his police record and political background, says Richard K. Groulx, assistant executive secretary. At one point the council held his job open for him while he was in jail for illegal agitation tactics.

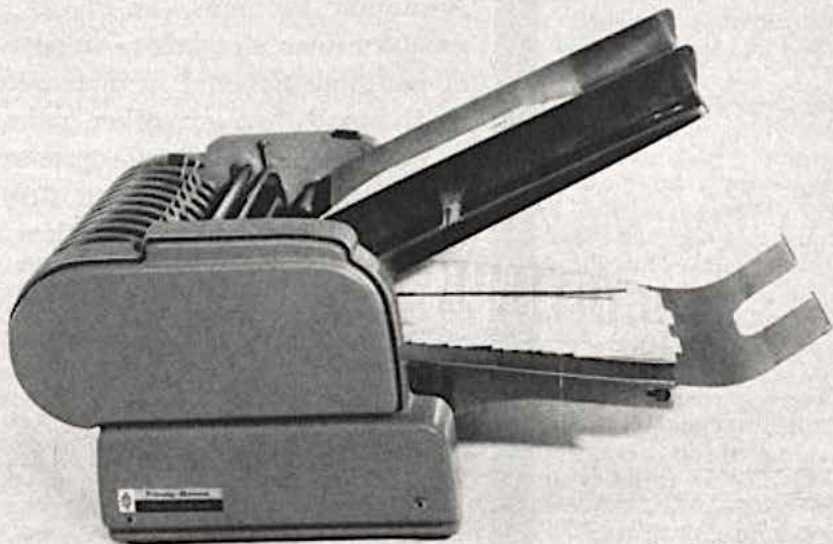
He was finally let go, added Mr. Groulx, partly because the \$640,000 program was phasing out and partly because of "incidents" on the job, such as his hurling rocks at people from a truck.

"He was unable to distinguish between leading his kids and sort of joining them," explained Mr. Groulx.

Mr. Comfort recently faced return to jail for turning out some 400 students to picket Oakland police headquarters in a demonstration

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against alleged police brutality. The same Mr. Comfort's continuing ties to poverty efforts were reflected when he turned up on the editorial board of a militant new publication, *Flatlands*. It is named for a section of Oakland with a high concentration of poor.

To quote the publication: "It's like government's just one big structure; and it won't bend or crack at all. We don't down any one person; we down the whole works, the whole way of thinking and promising and doing nothing at all. We're not going to take it any more."

With him on the editorial board is Gerald Leo, a former work-study participant and now leader of the breakaway faction on the Oakland poverty board.

Some photographs for the publication are supplied by the same Howard Harawitz, who is a former Du Boisclub member and now a member of the Berkeley anti-poverty board.

Official sponsors of the publication include the East Oakland Christian Parish, which gets an estimated \$16,000 for a work-study staff to "work with neighborhood groups to motivate for social action."

Another sponsor of the publication is Lew Harris, an official of the Oakland Project, University of Cal-

ifornia Extension, whose job includes channeling students into community work.

Two work-study participants from the university are engaged as reporters for *Flatlands* and researchers on community issues.

Asked why he helps give a platform to Mark Comfort and like-minded agitators, Mr. Harris told *NATION'S BUSINESS* that such people, with whom he does not agree, are far more dangerous if left in isolation.

Robert Scheer, an advocate of more militant anti-poverty measures, has entered the Democratic primary race for Congress. Mr. Scheer is foreign editor of the Bay area *Ramparts* magazine. The publication's February issue blasted Oakland's citizen leadership, charging it is unresponsive to the needs of the poor. A top Scheer lieutenant is Jerry Rubin, founder of the Vietnam Day Committee. He describes the upcoming Congressional primary as an attempt to destroy the Democratic party:

"A campaign like this—radical candidate, radical program, radical goals, and independence from the Democratic Party structure, but use of its primary as a forum—will disillusion more people with the Demo-

cratic Party than a hundred speeches on the party's nature."

A confidential survey of paid anti-poverty workers in the Bay area disclosed that class-struggle convictions were widespread among these workers. The survey reflects a suspicion of and hostility toward the "power structure," which seems to include all incumbent economic and political leadership.

Workers' views, the survey says, "range from a militant identification with the poor to a pronounced distaste for the poor."

"The more militant . . . speak not of helping or uplifting the poor but of accepting the poor now as full equals. They tend to place responsibility for the condition of the poor on the 'power structure' and are generally hostile to the power structure.

"They have a certain distrust of helper institutions, including the war on poverty, and are very sensitive to the dangers of selling out to the power structure. They see themselves as agents for organizing the poor to fight successfully for objectives defined by the poor and pursued by means defined by the poor."

And these are the reported feelings of employees paid by the poverty program designed to help the

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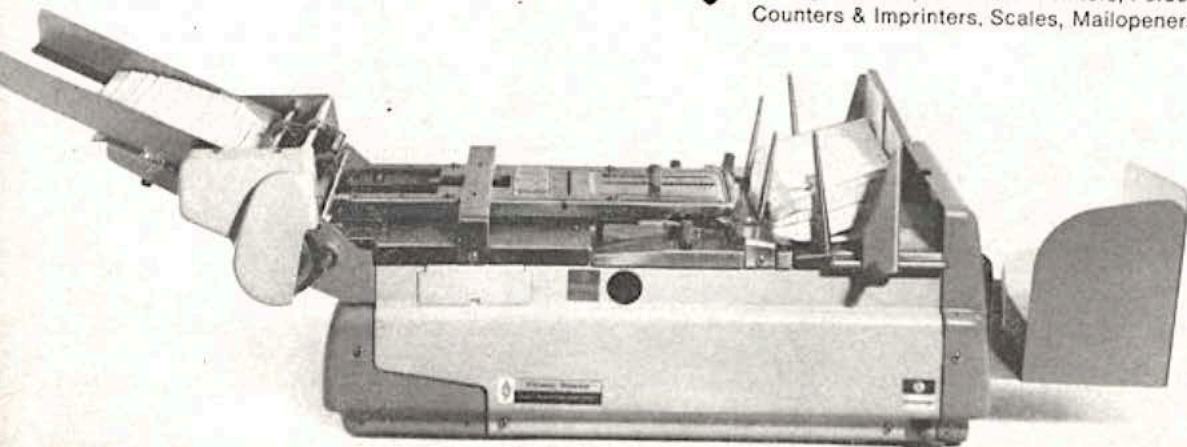
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poor help themselves. Ironically, a Washington conference on poverty held since the survey disclosed that many of the poor really don't want poverty-stricken people to have complete charge of the program. Their reasoning is that a person unable to meet his own economic needs is hardly equipped to run a program for others.

Out of hand?

A Bay area official concedes privately: "We're going to get burned one of these days," explaining that militant amateur representatives of the poor, in their zeal for a worthy cause, can get out of hand.

This almost happened in San Francisco recently, where a paid community organizer turned out his 21-member staff for a potentially explosive demonstration which he concedes could have triggered a riot similar to that which occurred in the Watts area of Los Angeles.

Learning that a family was to be evicted from a public housing project for failure to pay rent, Harold Brooks asked for staff volunteers who didn't mind civil disobedience or the prospect of going to jail.

They held a "stand-in" at the apartment—some 50 to 60 people jammed inside sitting on the furniture, while a hostile crowd of some 100 to 150 unemployed youths and people with grievances against the housing authority milled outside.

"If the police had started to move anybody, we would have had a real blow-up," he told NATION'S BUSINESS. "You probably would have had a Watts situation . . . all the ingredients were there."

Comments a Bay area official: "Some people are naïve enough to think you need a couple of Wattses to get anything done. Well, they had their riots in Watts and what did it get them?" Fear of recurrence has blocked rebuilding in Watts and many local businesses are afraid to reopen.

In Washington, D.C. federally paid anti-poverty workers have taken an equally aggressive role in organizing slum dwellers into militant protest groups. At a recent grievance rally of Negro residents of the Barry Farms public housing project, white anti-poverty operatives listened attentively as the project residents ticked off their complaints to reporters. As the complainants' emotions rose, they began to shout that they would march on

the offices of the housing authority. At this point, a white organizer clapped his hands and exuberantly said, "You think this is something? Wait until summer. We are going to blow this town wide open."

A NATION'S BUSINESS investigation of the anti-poverty program in the nation's capital disclosed the presence on the program payroll of a number of extremists of the political left with backgrounds in highly militant civil rights organizations, in ultra-left labor groups and in movements opposing the Administration's Viet Nam policy. Some anti-poverty workers openly boast that they are socialists, and one hears the familiar, repeated talk about "shaking the power structure."

Crackdown on subversives

This spring the Office of Economic Opportunity issued regulations saying: "Manifestations of disloyalty to the United States, membership in subversive organizations or lack of sympathy with the objectives of the Economic Opportunity Act [are] inconsistent with employment in a community action program."

The community action programs are the big guns of the anti-poverty war wherein the poor, cooperating with local anti-poverty boards, seek solutions to their problems.

But the government's new regulations don't cover the work-study program or the Neighborhood Youth Corps, which are other phases of the federal anti-poverty fight. And since the new rules aren't retroactive, they don't cover community action people already hired.

An anti-poverty official concedes that they say, in effect:

"If you already have a Joe Stalin on the payroll it's okay; just don't hire any more."

Furthermore, as OEO Director Sargent Shriver recently pointed out, these regulations are "not cast in concrete," and can always be relaxed—or dropped.

A politically astute agency spokesman added that there was considerable criticism from Congress over the regulations—not because they hadn't come out earlier but because they'd been issued at all.

Some members of Congress who favor the objectives of the federal war on poverty deplore the obviously loose administration of the program which has permitted radicals, extremists and outright subversive elements to use tax money to exploit the poor for their own political, economic and social ends. **END**