

WELCOME TO

RENOVATION FOR PROFIT

FOR A PANORAMIC view of the best—and the sootiest—of downtown Cleveland the Barry Madigan building is the place to live. Located at the foot of the Detroit-Superior bridge, the Madigan apartment building stands as a four-story brick-and-stone gateway to the New West Side, one of the oldest and poorest sections of the city.



The Barry Madigan Building

To the north of the Madigan building is Cleveland's version of the Empire State Building, the Terminal Tower, which rises above the billowing steel mills of the "flats," the city's major industrial area along the Cuyahoga River. To the east is the West Side Market, an open air food market established in the mid-1800s where farmers still sell their produce. To the west is a cross-cultural mural that heralds the neighborhood's varied composition and working-class history.

The building's 40 residents range from old men on pensions and a former chef in a downtown restaurant, to an artist who has totally redesigned his apartment and young activists engaged in neighborhood social-service projects.

Amid this diversity the Madigan building has grown into a small community where people care for each other's needs, trade furniture back and forth, and gather regularly for summer picnics or holiday dinners.

"In a sense the building is a microcosm of the character, diversity and potential of the Near West Side. There's a friendly, close atmosphere here," says Sister Renee Krisko, a grade school teacher who has lived there for two years. When the electricity and heat recently went out, for example, the building's managers, Kathy and Bobby, brought everyone into their apartment for coffee. Later, Sister Krisko baked apple brown betty from ingredients provided by her next door neighbor and passed out portions to everyone.

But Sister Krisko and other residents fear that their supportive, though poor, life style is being steadily swept aside by social and economic currents that are altering the composition of the Near West Side. The building is for sale and will probably be purchased by people associated with Ohio City, a loosely-defined group of middle income suburbanites who are flowing back into the city's boundaries.

"The Near West Side is great because of the basic honesty of poor people who don't have money and things to hide behind," says Frank Gaydosh, a Madigan building resident who works with black children in a nearby housing project. "When the building is sold the new owners will fix everything up and force the people out, changing all the charm that they are striving for in the first place. Artists may move in, but you can only see so many clay pots and stained glass windows."

"If people have to leave, it will be very difficult to find someplace comparable in cleanliness, general upkeep and cost. This is one of the last places for poor and elderly people who don't want to move into concrete boxes in the projects," adds Sister Krisko.

When it comes to renovation, however, the Madigan building is a prime target. Built in 1903, it once housed a trolley station connecting that corner to Public Square, the hub of the downtown area. (There has been some talk of reopening that station.) Located on the spot where two Indian foot-paths converged, it has been declared a historic monument. Most importantly, the building is walking distance from downtown and presents easy access to transportation, grocery stores, hospitals, schools and community centers.

The *Cleveland Plain Dealer* reported that the Madigan building had been sold to a group of investors headed by Francis Gaul, a state legislator, which last September purchased the Kiefer's building next door. (The owner of Madigan's vehemently denied the report.)

According to assistant manager Dan Gaul, the group intends to put over \$200,000 into renovating Kiefer's Restaurant, a popular watering hole for local politicians, and fixing up the 18 suites upstairs. Rents, which are now \$70 per month, are expected to triple when the work is completed.

"Kiefer's used to be just a good place to eat. Now it's a restaurant of historical significance. People are investing a lot of money to make a lot of money and they're doing it at the expense of the people here and the facilities they've used," complains Gaydosh, who is certain that menu prices will soar when the "new" Kiefer's is unveiled.

The story of the Madigan building and Kiefer's is just one fragment in a controversy that has fractured the Near West Side since the late 1960s, when people from the suburbs began to move back into the city to take advantage of the convenience, cheap housing and architectural splendor.

The controversy is not unique to Cleveland. Many northern industrial cities which experienced a movement to the suburbs in the post-WWII era of prosperity, cheap gasoline and rapid housing construction, are now witnessing a remigration to the inner city in the wake of fiscal crisis and expensive energy.

On the Near West Side the lines of conflict are not clearly drawn. Many community residents generally favor the renovation of dilapidated housing and the revitalization of neighborhood businesses. But they vaguely resent their new "middle class" neighbors. Even the newcomers are divided: some abhor the area's minority population, others are in it just for a quick profit, and still others hope to involve indigenous neighborhood people in a battle to preserve the positive aspects of their way of life.

The terrain is well worth the fight, since it is intimately bound to the working class history of northeast Ohio.

In 1796, when Moses Cleaveland surveyed the east side of the Cuyahoga River, he was not allowed to set foot on the west bank because of a federal treaty with the Indians. In 1836, after that treaty was broken, the west side was incorporated as Ohio City, the first city in Cuyahoga County. The east side was incorporated as Cleveland a month later, sparking an urban competition that survives to this day. In 1854, the two cities were amalgamated.

The early citizens of Ohio City were carpenters, brewers and laborers whose last names indicated their Irish, German and Dutch backgrounds. The completion of the Ohio Canal brought thousands of Irish immigrants to the west side to work in the city's booming shipbuilding industry.

The class distinctions in Ohio City were stark. The hub of the city was Franklin Circle, the "center of fashion and elegant homes of the wealthy," according to a contemporary newspaper description. Here lived Mark Hanna, U.S. Senator and Republican boss, along with many of the area's rising industrial elite. With the coming of the steel industry to the flats, they gradually moved to Euclid Avenue on the east side, away from the soot and smoke.

As the early residents moved further

to the west, their homes were occupied by Hungarians, Czechs and other Eastern Europeans who labored in the mills. After WWII, the neighborhood again changed hands as mechanization and exhausted coal mines drove Appalachians to northern cities and Puerto Ricans fled the overcrowded conditions of the East Coast. The east side, meanwhile, became largely black, setting the stage for the election of Carl Stokes, the first black mayor of a major industrial city, in 1968.

By the 1960s the Near West Side had become a run-down poor community populated by white Appalachians, Puerto Ricans, American Indians and elderly ethnics. Mansions had become rooming houses. The crime rate increased. And area teenagers attended a high school with the highest dropout rate in the city.

But the Near West Side also became the city's most heavily organized area. Students for a Democratic Society sponsored several organizing projects there. War on Poverty money flowed into a myriad of social service agencies, which now number in the hundreds. In the late '60s a group of activists moved there from the suburbs, forming the Thomas Merton Community to carry out various activities—a hospitality house, a community bail fund, daily meals for the destitute—in the Catholic Worker tradition.

STOPPING THE EXODUS



Bruce Hedderson

IN 1969 ANOTHER group of suburbanites moved in for quite different reasons.

"We're not really 'invading' the area with some sort of

historical or architectural fetish, but want to better the neighborhood for the people already there as well as provide a living history for the people of Cleveland and surrounding suburbs," Bruce Hedderson, an urban planner from Toronto, Canada, commented at the time.

"This will create a stability to the neighborhood that will change people's minds from thoughts of joining the suburban exodus. The property values will go up, and a sense of community will spring up that will result in better city services, police protection, recreation—all the things that make living and raising a family as pleasant in the inner city as anywhere in the suburbs."

To transform these noble, optimistic words into reality, Hedderson, with six other individuals, formed the Ohio City Community Development Association (OCCDA) to "encourage citizens to maintain or establish their homes in Ohio City and restore or revitalize them." Their stated goal was to create a "dynamic neighborhood steeped in history and charm, convenience and exuberance."

For Hedderson the main attraction of the area was the architecture. "You just can't get the same kind of aesthetics in the suburbs," he explained to *IN THESE TIMES*. "The Near West Side is like a village. So a big push initially was to smarten the exteriors. We felt that if we came here and did something to the outsides—sandblasting, constantly picking up the paper, putting on a fresh coat of paint—that the people next door might do the same thing. And that's what has happened."

Because of the renovation of his house, a 66-year-old Hungarian woman living next door decided to stay in the neighborhood, Hedderson says. She and other holdouts were finding it difficult to remain because of drug trafficking, prostitution and "poor people who were just not responsible," Hedderson says. "When she discovered that people were coming back, it was like a resurrection for her."

But Hedderson's attitude towards the neighborhood also betrays an unabashed social-darwinist, survival-of-the fittest philosophy that can readily be interpreted as a fundamental repugnance towards poor people. When confronted with the resentment expressed by some community residents, he replies that this neighborhood has historically been a transitory one anyway. By investing money here, he says, Ohio City people are both saving houses and lending a measure of stability, permanence and "responsibility" that would otherwise be lacking.

"Being poor is largely a psychological point of view," he says. "Let's not kid ourselves, many poor people are just not responsible. If people feel resentment, they shouldn't direct it at me. It's something I'm incapable of correcting. It's just frustration that they didn't get some breaks in life."

OHIO CITY

"Many poor people that live here don't leave anything behind. They suck it dry and tear it apart. We had the city plant new trees, for instance, and within a week a bunch of hoods tore up every tree on the street."

Other Ohio City people hasten to point out that Hedderson's views are somewhat extreme and not necessarily representative. Indeed, since 1969 a wide assortment of people have moved into the area, including young couples with more progressive social views who chose the neighborhood over the suburbs. Their migration has, in fact, convinced many community people to stay and has begun to restore the area's proud tradition.

According to a local savings and loan association, about \$20 million in improvements have been made by residential property owners in Ohio City. Over 360 homes have been purchased for renovation or remodeling. A half-dozen restaurants and taverns have also been refurbished, attracting more lunch hour business from downtown. A merchants' group, the Ohio City Redevelopment Association is also trying to attract new business into the area.

An especially dramatic change has occurred at Heck's. Once a grungy corner bar, it is now one of Ohio City's quaint, glittering centerpieces. To the rear of the bar is a restaurant constructed like a greenhouse with high-back wicker king's chairs, hanging ferns, a circular stairway, modern art, and soft rock'n'roll music as background. In addition to the basic hamburger, priced at \$2.15, the luncheon menu includes Croque Monsieur, Turkey Madear, and Salade Veg Marinare.

Though some community people resent

these high-priced restaurants, the primary objections to the Ohio City phenomenon center on the displacement of long-time residents, the disruption of some community services, and the rise in rents by landlords.

Rosemary Rivera, a young Puerto Rican woman who has lived on the Near West Side for 14 years, has been searching for an apartment in the Ohio City area for six months. She believes Ohio City has made it much more difficult to find a clean place for the low rents that were once commonplace.

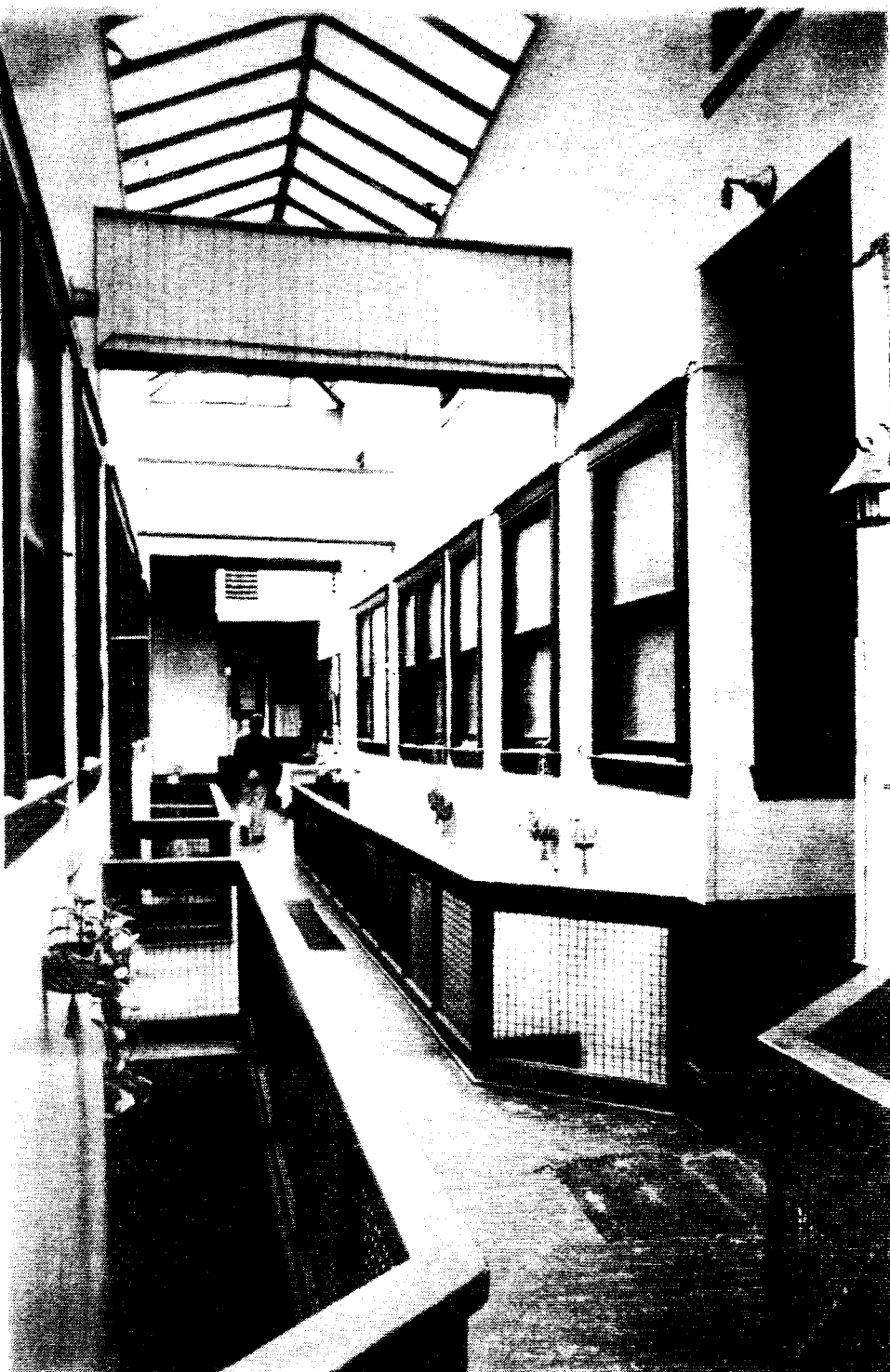
"When they come in and buy houses left and right and not give a damn where people go who live there, it's ridiculous," she argues. "Now even slum landlords are charging higher rents because they say it's a choice area."

Rivera cites the example of one real estate speculator who bought a house for about \$12,000, renovated it, and is now selling it for \$59,000. Similar houses have been on the market for years, she says, but are not being bought because of the outrageous prices.

She also bristles at the arrogant attitudes displayed by some Ohio City entrepreneurs. She walked past Heck's several years ago as it was being fixed up and asked one of the carpenters what was going on. The new owner, John Saile, one of the OCCDA founders, introduced himself and told her that if he had his way, he'd wipe all of the Appalachians and Puerto Ricans out of the area.

"If you're a businessman, Ohio City is great. If you're a community person, it's a drag," she concludes. "If people got the money, they may as well stay in the suburbs and leave us what we've got."

BY DAN MARSCHELL
PHOTOS BY STEVE CAGAN



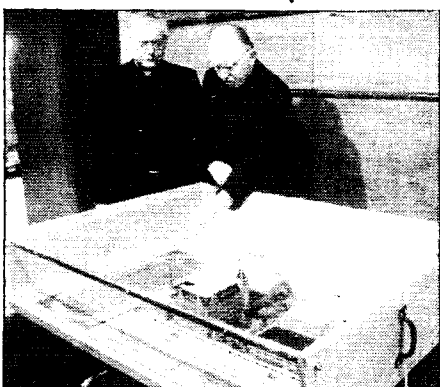
Interior of the Kiefer Building, one of the structures renovated by Near West Side developers.

STABILIZING INSTITUTIONS

THE DECIDING factor in the transformation of the Near West Side may be the actions of prominent "stabilizing" institutions. A 1975 study by Kent State University architecture students found that the "main stabilizing factors in the neighborhood" included St. Ignatius High School, the West Side Market, and Lutheran Medical Center. After deciding to resist the traditional flight to the suburbs, these institutions intend to invest over \$29 million in construction and renovation by 1981.

The expansion of St. Ignatius, however, has also become a source of controversy. The only Jesuit college preparatory high school in the city, the 90-year-old St. Ignatius is a pocket of suburbia with minimal responsiveness to the immediate neighborhood. The vast majority of its all-male student body are white, though the school purports to serve the entire Cleveland area.

The school has been systematically buying occupied houses, apartment buildings and vacant lots in their plan to spend \$7.5 million to construct an intramural practice field—which they say will be available to the surrounding community—a new library, a student commons area and an arts and music center. The complex will encompass 13 acres when completed.



Coordinators of St. Ignatius' expansion.

Rev. James O'Reilly, school president, argues that St. Ignatius, a trustee of the Ohio City-Redevelopment Association, is an asset to the city's corporate community because it turns out superior graduates, 75 percent of whom pursue their careers in Cleveland after college. "We are getting donations because the corporations are beginning to understand that we are a real part of the rebirth of the city," he recently told the *Plain Dealer*. They hope to raise \$1.48 million from business sources.

"When St. Ignatius bought up and tore down buildings, what consideration did they give to the lack of housing available for people," asks Sister Krisko, a Catholic whose brother attended the school. "I don't understand how a football field really helps the neighborhood.

For Ignatius students, it seems like a matter of survival to get in and out of the neighborhood safely. Instead, the school should promote an understanding of the structures that perpetuate poverty."

Community sentiment towards St. Ignatius is also mixed. The school does carry out some community-oriented projects, including a requirement that sophomores spend at least three hours a week for one semester working for the elderly and the poor in nearby hospitals, nursing homes and community schools. Those most negative towards the school are, of course, those whose homes have been directly affected by the expansion.

Tom Wagner, an Ignatius graduate, has seen the expansion go up to his front door. He moved to Ohio City a year ago because he found the neighborhood's composition exciting and could fix up a home and still recover the cost of renovation. He also realized the necessity for stronger community organization. As the president of the Ohio City Block Club Association, a federation of 13 block clubs, he has fought several minor battles with the school.

When Ignatius bought one house and left it vacant for three months, members of the Carroll Avenue block club tacked a sign on the front door saying: "This property is owned by St. Ignatius High School! Please rip it down or board it up." Two days later, after threatening to sue the

block club, the school leveled the building.

For Wagner, and a "new generation" of Ohio City migrants, the neighborhood presents a tremendous challenge. "You've got to have a place that is competitive with the suburbs. You can't run a city with old folks and poor people," he explained to *IN THESE TIMES*. "The challenge of this area is to keep indigenous community people working with those who moved from outlying areas."

As more self-conscious organizers settle in the area, the Near West Side could begin to fulfill the model projected by the residents of the Barry Madigan building. Right now, there is no overt opposition to the encroachment upon Ohio City. But many community people still have hostile feelings about the manner in which the migration is being conducted.

"People have lived around here for many years," says Kathy Pashko, a Madigan building manager who has lived in the area for 27 years. "It's wrong that they're knocking people out of their houses. It's good that they're fixing up buildings, but most people can't afford these outrageous rents and high restaurant prices."

"The Ohio City people are really doing it backwards," adds Frank Gaydosh. "They're fixing up buildings when they should be patching up the people by helping them build confidence in themselves."

IN THESE TIMES

Editorial

Jim Yanagisawa

Ten years after: Carter's budget or King's Dream?

Ten years have passed since President Lyndon B. Johnson's National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (the Kerner Commission) released its report. President Johnson had appointed it to find the causes of the black uprisings that shook American cities in the '60s. The Commission traced the disorders to white racism that consigned most black Americans to ghetto life. It warned that in the absence of drastic changes, the U.S. was moving toward two separate and unequal societies divided by race.

The National Urban League has just released its own report, "The State of Black America, 1978," finding that no such drastic changes have since occurred and that the momentum toward two separate and unequal societies has continued and in many ways accelerated.

On the basis of six detailed studies on economic conditions, black families and children, education, housing, social welfare, and politics, the report observes that the Commission's "major recommendations have largely gone unimplemented," and concludes that "the illnesses that afflicted black communities in 1967—unemployment, poverty, alienation, and the entire litany of the endemic problems of the ghetto—have not cleared up, and indeed, the patient has grown sicker."

The studies reveal a "sombre" picture, "clearly warning that the absence of the violence that aroused and alarmed the nation a decade ago, should not be interpreted as a sign that all is well in Black America."

These are not the firebrand words of a revolutionary but the cautious understatement of Vernon E. Jordan Jr., president of what has always been regarded as among the more conservative and least visionary of black organizations.

Deteriorating conditions.

Here are some of the vital—or morbid—statistics:

- By the end of 1977 black unemployment was over twice what it was in 1967 and at the highest level ever recorded. The official figures show 638,000 blacks or 7.4 percent unemployed in 1967, and 1,492,000 or 13.2 percent in 1977.

- If "unofficial" (real) unemployment is counted, the overall black jobless rate is 25 percent and for black teenagers about 60 percent.

- More blacks were unemployed in the "recovery" year of 1977 than in the "recession" trough of early 1975.

- The number of black families designated as poor has remained the same over the decade (at 1.6 million), while that of whites has dropped (from 4.1 to 3.4 million).

- Black median family income rose from 58 percent of white in 1966 to 61 percent in 1970, during the years of economic expansion, but since then has fallen back to 59 percent, and in dollar terms the gap has widened.

- Nearly 75 percent of the black children in the nation's 26 largest cities attend schools with 90 to 100 percent minority enrollment, and these schools are for the most part underfunded.

It is not from want of black struggle and aspiration that the majority of blacks have experienced little change or deterioration in their living conditions. Given half

a chance, blacks have made notable achievements against even the heaviest of odds.

In the decade since the Kerner report black high school enrollment rates have risen five times as fast as for whites; between 1970 and 1975 the black high school graduation rate was higher than the white, and the dropout rate only slightly higher. But once out of high school black youths find fewer and fewer jobs. Black college enrollment has risen from 4.6 percent of the total in 1966 to 10.7 percent by 1976. But much of that enrollment is accounted for by historically black colleges and community (two-year) colleges, and blacks remain grossly underrepresented in graduate and professional schools.

Between 1966 and 1976 the proportion of black families with "middle income" or better (\$15,000 or more) has increased at twice the rate of white and now stands at about 25 percent (the proportion of white families with such income is over 50 percent).

But as Jordan summarizes the record, "the harsh truth remains that the majority of blacks have not seen their status materially improved over the past decade, and that for many, their lives are still lived out in despair and deprivation."

Dr. Bernard C. Watson of Temple University, author of one of the six detailed studies incorporated in the league's report, puts it more bluntly: "It is becoming increasingly apparent to more and more black Americans...that what once appeared to be receptivity to and support for full equality for black Americans may well have been, at best, a temporary phenomenon and, at worst, an illusion."

The various public programs in civil rights, employment, education, and housing over the past decade have at best tended toward aiding the "integration" of less than 25 percent of the black people into "middle income" status and more opportunity than before, though still with far from full equality. But they leave the other 75 percent as a "nation apart."

What kind of integration?

In a perverse sense, "integration" has worked—if integration means fostering a somewhat larger black "middle class" with little real power but pursuing rewards tied to accepting the dominant society, and tending to separate itself from the great mass of black people, who are left to sink into deeper poverty and misery. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that this is precisely the kind of "integration" government policy has been designed to achieve.

The position embodied in the Urban League report rejects such "integration" and has set it at odds with what appears to be a "middle class" strategy emerging among top NAACP leaders like Benjamin L. Hooks. The League's position is at odds with the policies of the Carter administration, now more clearly evident with the unveiling of its 1979 fiscal year budget.

Carter's budget sustains the Nixon-Ford policies of placing military spending, winning "business confidence," fighting inflation, and balancing the budget above social programs and full employment. But as Dr. Bernard E. Anderson of the

Wharton School and author of one of the report's studies points out, "national economic policies are critical to economic gains for the black communities," and "slow growth policies are devastating to black economic aspirations." A full employment economy is, in Anderson's words, "a *sine qua non* for economic equality; it always has been and continues to be so today."

A budget of little hope.

The Carter budget projects a growth rate that will keep the unemployment rate above 5 percent well into the 1980s. Its programs for urban development, housing, education, and health care are too small to make more than a dent in ghetto conditions. Its special programs for treating "structural" unemployment, while helping some, will leave most needy blacks unaided. Robert C. Weaver, another study author and Secretary of Housing and Urban Development under President Johnson, caustically observes that even the lower 4 percent unemployment definition of "full employment," would do little "to relieve the structural unemployment of blacks."

Perhaps more important, as Weaver emphasizes, "a high level of employment is a *sine qua non* for establishing an economic and political climate" conducive to sustained black gains. Special programs heralded as aiding blacks in the midst of high white unemployment and economic insecurity inevitably exacerbates racist feelings and politics, setting whites against blacks in competition for scarce jobs, housing, educational opportunities, and health care.

It is no accident that the larger part of black gains came in the late '60s with relatively higher general employment levels (supported by war-time spending and military service), that those gains stopped or were eroded in the slow growth years of the '70s, and that white political and ideological resistance to black gains has grown steadily since 1970.

The Carter budget and the policies it projects into the foreseeable future point

toward more "positions of strength" abroad and increasing urban decay at home, deepening racial conflict, and a quickening drift into two separate and unequal societies. We shall probably soon have another Presidential Commission appointed in the wake of new "civil disorders" to tell us, like the Kerner Commission ten years ago, that "white racism" is the root cause.

But that explanation is true only if "white racism" means not only prejudice or white "psychology" but also the dominant corporate system of property, investment, and labor, and the government policies designed to preserve it. For that system stands at the heart of the power structure that makes a full employment economy impossible, and that turns whites against blacks.

King and Malcolm.

February 1978 also marks the tenth anniversary of the assassination of Martin Luther King. Like Malcolm X, King came to realize that the "black question" was as much a class and property as a race question; that without social planning that must fundamentally threaten the preservation of the corporate power structure and its class system, there could be no sustained movement of blacks, and the American people as a whole, toward equality. He understood that the "black question" is also the question of American democracy and its genuine attainment. Like Malcolm X, he died for those beliefs.

If we are to live to fulfill those beliefs, we will have to do more than celebrate Malcolm's and King's deaths. We will have to honor their beliefs by acting upon them. As good a place as any to begin is to work for political coalitions among whites and blacks that can formulate a people's budget and policies against such corporate budgets and policies as Carter's, and that can elect representatives at all levels of government committed to fighting for their adoption and implementation. The Dream remains. Will we make it a reality?



With the Kerner Commission's recommendations still unimplemented, the illnesses afflicting black communities have worsened, and America's division into two separate societies deepens.