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Low-rent public housing gives your city a chance to start rooting out its slums and rehousing the low-income families who live there.

It took four years of hard fighting in Washington to give you this chance. For four years, the real estate lobby battled against enactment of public housing legislation by Congress. The lobby lost and public housing won. Today, the public housing program is the law of the land.

#### *Fair Means — or Foul*

But the lobby isn't calling it quits. It is moving into cities like yours all over the country, trying by any means—fair or foul—to make the law a dead letter. As Rodney M. Lockwood, 1949 president of the National Association of Home Builders, put it:

**“Approval of Public Law 171 by a narrow margin transfers the fight from Washington to your front yard.”**

Many cities already have had hand-to-hand struggles with the lobby. They found it well-heeled, unscrupulous, determined. It does a skillful job of confusing and frightening the public.

This booklet will help you to carry on the good fight for better housing in your town. It details the formula for victory

--and it describes the strategy and the tactics the lobby will use against you. It tells how to overcome them.

Fights like this get rough, as you will see in the following pages. You will be up against a well-financed opposition working under professional outside direction.

But you will have two powerful weapons on your side:

**the truth about public housing**  
**and**  
**a large body of unselfish, earnest**  
**friends who will help you tell the truth.**

If you use your resources well and profit by the experience of other localities, you can win.

Scores of cities as shown below are moving forward with their public housing programs today, despite the lobby's attempts to stop them. Prepare now, meet the attack before it begins--and you can have better housing for your town, too.

### ***The Record . . .***

PROGRESS MADE AS OF

June 1950 under

HOUSING ACT OF 1949

611 . . . cities have applied	
	for . . . 131,901 units
196 . . . cities have loans approved	
	for . . . 270,816 units
239 . . . cities have cooperation agree-	
	ments approved with their local
	governing bodies
	for . . . 193,129 units
155 . . . cities have sites selected, devel-	
	opment programs approved,
	loan contracts signed, or proj-
	jects under construction
	for . . . 67,382 units

# A Long Line of Victories . . . has set the winning pattern

You're on a winning team.

The battle to rid the country of its slums and rebuild them with decent low-rental housing has been going on for at least a hundred years. The cause has been gaining ground all the time. During the past 15 years or so, there have been gigantic gains.

Those who are taking part in the current round of this long fight have a talent for victory. Time and again over the years they have faced the same adversaries: builders and mortgage bankers and real estate dealers. Right now, these opponents have put on some new war paint and rehearsed some new war chants. But under the false whiskers, it's the same old gang. They will be cut down to size with the same old weapons that the victors have always used: the justice of their cause and the decency of the average man.

## SECRETS OF SUCCESS

For the sake of some of the new recruits in the battle against the slums, a quick review of the techniques of victory is in order.

First, never forget that a man is judged as much by his enemies as by his friends. So, take a look around the town to see who your enemies are. In one town, the special interest opposition frankly painted its own portrait for the local citizens: "We told them the truth; we told the voters we were selfish, that public housing was hurting our pocketbooks."

That description pretty well fits the opposition everywhere

**Waco**

Segregation Is Kept  
No City Tax Involved  
The attack staged by  
landlords and  
dealers on  
tension  
in

**Headlines  
from all over . . .  
spot the source of opposition**

**San Francisco**

**Commission Approves  
to Build**

James R. Chamberlain, chairman of the Chattanooga Housing Commission, said he had a meeting with the city council on Monday to discuss the anti-poverty program.

## St. Paul Builders Demand Housing Vote

Both sides gathered strength today in the dispute over St. Paul's proposed 18 million dollar public housing program. The St. Paul Home Builders association voted to support the St. Paul Home Owners association in its demand for a referendum on the matter. Both major political parties in Ramsey county, how ever criticized attempts to knock out the program.

The Home Builders Group charged that the proposed project would take men and materials from the builders and "put us out."

The group collected more than \$3,000 to finance "a program to educate the people on the dangers of public housing."

## Fight Urged On New U. S. Housing Plan

**State Appraisers  
Conclude Seminar**

**Seminar**  
By Jim Buckley  
Three hundred California real estate appraisers, the men and women who have teamed on every type of real estate project from back home to the front lines of reconstruction and Federal housing

**FIGHT ON PUBLIC HOUSING IS HAILED**  
Nelson Trac

Herbert U. Nelson Traces  
and in Referendums

The group collected more than \$3,000 to finance "a program to educate the people on the dangers of public housing."

The Home Assn. is headed by...

# Home, Property Owners Assn. Spokesman Argues Against Public Housing, Says Tax on Private Projects Would Do As Well

In order to continue providing for all states of the argument...

...of public housing...

...statement by A...

...in behalf of...

In order to continue presentation  
of all sides of the argument in the  
case of public housing, herewith  
statement by Atty.  
in behalf of the  
owners Asan

**Real Estate Board Demands  
Opinion Poll on Public Housing**

...being worked out for the low-cost...  
...white and black on the com...  
...-served for August...  
...every...  
...heard...  
...of 17...  
...tion...  
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...clear...

# Realty Board Wants Vote On 'Unfair' Public Housing

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...ic housing  
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...air tax  
...ther

# National Builders Blocking Public Housing, Writer Says

## Group Repeats Housing Stand

Reaffirmation of their position as to the inadvisability of federally sponsored nuclear

**Realtors Pledge Housing Battle**

**Housing**

A "communitic" label was hung on here yesterday as Georgia real estate men say such programs in the state. Some 23 directors in the C

**Columbus**

## Builders Plan Battle for Fall Housing Vote

City Men Get Outside  
Help in Organizing In-  
tensive Fight Against  
Public Projects

## Real Estate Board Opposes Additional Federal Housing

**National Federation Opposes**  
A legal ruling on ways and means to interrupt further public housing programs here by the Housing Authority of the City of New York was the subject of a meeting March 21, at the St. James Hotel. O. L. Jordan, board chairman, said Tuesday.

# How Real Estate Lobby Here Has Stymied Housing

Chicago

—wherever it turns up, in Maine or New Mexico. The opposition is made up of organizations and individuals who are willing to see thousands upon thousands of families living under conditions that are actually banned by law in some instances for cattle and pigs and poultry—but tolerated for human beings. The opposition is made up of organizations and individuals who have been largely responsible for the confusion and congestion and disorder of our cities and towns as they endlessly barter and trade land and buildings without any thought of public welfare.

Herbert U. Nelson, the head of one of the national organizations that is daily working to defeat the low-rental housing program—the National Association of Real Estate Boards—has done his share of giving the character of the opposition a black eye. He stated his views of public affairs a year or so ago along these lines:

"I do not believe in democracy. I think it stinks. I don't think anybody except direct taxpayers should be allowed to vote. I don't believe women should be allowed to vote at all. Ever since they started, our public affairs have been in a worse mess than ever. . . ."

Earlier, Mr. Nelson had contributed another gem to political thought:

"Our big cities . . . are populated for the most part with the mass-man, devoid of intelligence, devoid of civic responsibility. He talks only about rights and has no conception of responsibilities. He will vote for anyone who offers him something for nothing. . . ."

Morton Bodfish, head of the United Savings and Loan League, another national leader of the opposition, sent out a bulletin to his membership at one time carrying this observation:

"It was a sad day for republicanism when it was decided to elect the president by popular vote. . . . Democracy is mob government, *demos*—a Greek word meaning the terrible people. . . ."

George W. West of Atlanta, Georgia, representing the con-

\* For source of quotation, see page 20.

struction and civic development department of the United States Chamber of Commerce, said in testifying on the Housing Act of 1949 before the House Committee on Banking and Currency:

"I was riding in Washington some time ago with a taxi driver, and he was fussing about housing. I said: Why don't you buy some sheeting and 2 by 4's and some nails and roofing and build you a house? He never thought of it."

In earlier testimony before a Congressional committee, Mr. West once opined, in answer to a question as to what he would suggest be done for people in need of decent housing:

"... I think, paupers and poor people belong in the poor-house."

Thomas P. Coogan, 1950 president of the National Association of Home Builders, made this point in his initial message to the NAHB membership:

"Nothing should be done to prefer any person or group over the individual home owner. If there is any special consideration, it should be his."

These, then, are your enemies: the *leaders* of your enemies.

### *Your Friends*

And who are the friends of slum clearance—of low-rental housing? Here is a list of some of the organizations that fought for the passage of the Housing Act of 1949. There are local branches of most of these organizations in almost every city and town in the country. *They* are your friends—or they will become your friends, if you go to them with the story—and you can be proud of them. It is on the strength of such friendship that housing victories have been won during the past 100 years and that your housing victory will be won this year.

AMERICAN LEGION  
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS  
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN  
AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION

\* For source of quotation, see page 20.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR  
 AMERICAN HOME ECONOMICS ASSOCIATION  
 AMVETS  
 AMERICAN VETERANS COMMITTEE  
 CATHOLIC WAR VETERANS  
 CONGRESS OF INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATIONS  
 COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL ACTION OF THE CONGREGATIONAL  
 CHRISTIAN CHURCHES OF THE USA  
 COUNCIL FOR CHRISTIAN SOCIAL PROGRESS OF THE  
 NORTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION  
 COOPERATIVE LEAGUE OF THE UNITED STATES  
 DEPARTMENT OF CHRISTIAN SOCIAL RELATIONS. WOMEN'S  
 DIVISION. METHODIST CHURCH  
 DEPARTMENT OF CHRISTIAN SOCIAL RELATIONS, UNITED  
 COUNCIL OF CHURCH WOMEN  
 DIVISION OF SOCIAL EDUCATION AND ACTION, PRESBYTERIAN  
 CHURCH  
 FAMILY SERVICE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA  
 FEDERAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN AMERICA  
 INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MACHINISTS  
 JEWISH WAR VETERANS  
 LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE U. S.  
 NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED  
 PEOPLE  
 NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CONSUMERS  
 NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RURAL HOUSING  
 NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PARENTS AND TEACHERS  
 NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC CHARITIES  
 NATIONAL CATHOLIC WELFARE COUNCIL  
 NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CATHOLIC MEN  
 NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CATHOLIC WOMEN  
 NATIONAL COUNCIL OF JEWISH WOMEN  
 NATIONAL COUNCIL OF NEGRO WOMEN  
 NATIONAL BOARD OF THE YWCA  
 NATIONAL URBAN LEAGUE  
 NATIONAL FARMERS UNION  
 NATIONAL FEDERATION OF SETTLEMENTS  
 NATIONAL LUTHERAN COUNCIL  
 NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MUNICIPAL LAW OFFICERS

# Headlines in Beaumont . . .

## spotlight friends who helped win battle there

### MINISTERS FAVOR HOUSING PROJECT

Beaumont Association Cites  
Community Benefits  
In U. S. Program

Beaumont Ministerial association members yesterday went on record as favoring the public housing project which has been approved by the federal government. The project was taken up by the association during its luncheon meeting in the City Room of the Beaumont Hotel.

### FULLER TALKS TO WOMEN VOTERS

Juvenile Delinquency And  
Public Housing Are  
Topics Discussed

Members of the Beaumont League of Women Voters last night heard two talks on the local juvenile delinquency situation and later voted to sponsor a public forum on public housing for Beaumont.

The forum will be concentrated on the question of juvenile delinquency and public housing. The city will send other city participants in the program.

### TRADES COUNCIL FAVORS FEDERAL HOUSING PROJECT

Labor Group Says Action  
Following Consideration  
Of Needs Here and Study  
Of Similar Programs

The Beaumont Building Construction Trades Council has gone on record as favoring the federal housing project.

### Attorney To Be Altrusa Speaker

George Camp, attorney for the Beaumont Public Housing authority, will speak to the Altrusa club at a dinner meeting Tuesday night at 8 o'clock in the Mirror room of Hotel Beaumont.

Mrs. Mary Wakefield, president, is ill, and in her absence Miss Florence McClintock is to preside.

### Public Housing Explained To Rotary Club

There is much less federal control of the public housing program than most people believe. The Rotary club heard Mr. D. P. O'Connell, chief engineer of the Beaumont Public Housing authority, explain the program.

### Trades Council Backs Housing

Members of the Beaumont Building Trades Council and their families were urged to vote approval of the proposed 800-unit public housing project Tuesday in a resolution prepared and signed Friday by project officers.

Council members previously had approved the proposed project.

### HOUSING NOT TO AFFECT SCHOOLS

Units Would Be Divided Be-  
tween Districts, Authority  
Chairman Says

As public housing units would be placed in the city in a way as to not affect the schools, the chairman of the Beaumont Public Housing authority said.

### Labor Union Endorses Federal Housing Project

The Oil Workers' International Union, CIO in a recent meeting unanimously to support the federal income housing units. O. C. McLeod, president of the union, said that the organization had a lot of talk and was about to start construction here. We have been into some phases of the project, and we know that there is a pressing need for income housing and we are definitely in favor of it. We have given it considerable study. We realize that we as members of our union will

### A. J. Coburn Named To Head New Group For Public Housing

Association Meeting Draws  
60 Persons to Hear De-  
tails of Proposed Project  
In Beaumont

An organization to back the proposed construction of 800 public housing units here, the Beaumont Housing Unit for Better Housing, met last night in Hotel Beaumont and elected A. J. Coburn, president of the City Supply company, chairman of the

### CLERIC EXPLAINS HOUSING SETUP

Controls Are Set Locally  
Monsignor Tells  
Rotarians

Principal participation in the current public housing program is of local origin, Monsignor said.

Wednesday April 8, 1938

### Learn The TRUTH about BEAUMONT'S LOW-COST HOUSING PROJECT

(To be voted on by YOU Tuesday, April 11)  
AT  
TONIGHT'S  
GIANT RALLY  
City Auditorium . . . 7:30 o'clock

Your Speakers:

7:45 P. M. . . Rev. W. W. (Buck) JONES  
Pastor, First Christian Church

8:00 P. M. U. S. Congressman  
J. M. COMBS

(Who helped create Low-cost Housing for Low-income groups and who has been instrumental in securing the federal money for the project.)

Everybody!  
And when you know  
Vote FOR THE W  
Plan for Beaumont

### Labor Officials Give Approval To Housing Unit

Local trade union officials representing about 800 AFL members have approved the plan to construct 800 low-cost public housing units here.

The construction of the units would be under the supervision of the Beaumont Building Trades Council, which is the local labor council. The council has been studying the project for some time and has given its approval. The council also has been working on the plan to construct the units.



UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF MAYORS  
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

To work effectively with the men and women representing organizations such as those listed, some kind of orderly procedure will be needed and someone will have "to be in charge." In many cities—Pittsburgh and Cincinnati, Baltimore and San Francisco, for example—citizens housing associations have been in existence for many years, staffed by people with long periods of housing training and experience behind them. Such associations take on the job of coordinating action among the friends of housing; they collect and send out housing information; they conduct meetings and tours and sponsor all the many other types of activities necessary to keep a community housing conscious and moving forward toward housing progress.

But some kind of quick organizing is in order in cities where there is no long established housing council or committee and where there is a need for immediate action to defeat opponents of a local project under the Housing Act of 1949.

Here's a run-down of what can be done—with detailed suggestions following:

*Action Outline*

- 1—Bring together a nucleus group for leadership on policy and action as the first step. Then more and more people should be added and involved in the work.
- 2—Reach *all* community-wide groups for whatever help they may be willing and able to give.
- 3—Contact neighborhood and local groups to the extent possible.
- 4—Raise the finances that are needed.
- 5—Carry on sustained work with the press, including
  - a—repeated news coverage by press staff
  - b—writing of good news releases by your committee
  - c—encouraging editorials that are fair and informative

d—the use of paid advertisements, signed by local leaders

6—If there's time and "know how," issue special publications—leaflets and pamphlets that explain special types of problems and proposals involved in your local fight.

7—Use radio in a lively way, especially free time.

8—Set up a speaker's bureau to give talks to any and all kinds of groups and use plenty of pictures, slides, posters, dramatic charts.

9—Conduct tours of slums and use slum photos and facts as a valuable part of both the short and long educational job that should be done. Visit and publicize existing projects.

### *Leadership*

Success stories of housing programs in local communities often start with a few active and able leaders. Such a nucleus group must build itself up to 50 or 100 people, by bringing in all kinds of potential supporters of public housing in the community. This nucleus must be set up as an *action* group, ready to carry out an agreed upon program. A formal organization with officers and by-laws is not needed. Name a temporary chairman and go on from there. A working committee must be brought together from the major elements in the community who *want* a low-rent housing program; the committee must become a positive force in a drive for the building of public housing in order to clear slums.

The kind of individuals needed at the first stages are people who will give time and devotion to the fight. Then leaders from important organizations should be invited in from local chapters of national groups, city-wide bodies and neighborhood associations that are favorable to public housing or will rapidly become active supporters. The most direct way is for the temporary chairman of the housing committee to call the executive of a community organization and invite him either to come to a meeting to plan the program or to ap-

point someone to come in his place. Then interested individuals should be continually added. Individual business men, realtors, builders and bankers, and sometimes their local organizations, have seen the costs of slums and may often be ready to support public housing. Chambers of commerce in some communities have endorsed low-rent housing programs.

A small leadership group serving as a general staff can develop much force, adding to itself and snowballing as it grows, bringing in new people and passing out additional assignments and duties. A small harmonious group has dynamic possibilities when it is a committee that concentrates on the job at hand. Perhaps later it will grow into a stable, permanent citizens housing association that can give the community good service in enlarging general understanding of housing needs and programs.

### *Make Lots of Friends*

In short, the citizens housing committee should tie in with all the local groups possible. It may take one to three months to get an endorsement and a promise to get down to work from a local organization, which suggests that the job of getting support from a dozen to 100 organizations should begin early. The job should not be left to the last minute before a crucial vote of some kind is to be taken.

The citizens housing committee should work with local official bodies. They should get to know personally the city councilmen and the officials whose work comes closest to housing: meet with them, get their point of view, and get statements from them as to the actions that are needed to improve the community. Delegations of the leaders for public housing calling on the mayor and the city council make fine local news.

### *Finances*

Once the citizens housing committee has contacted many local organizations and brought them into the campaign for a program and once it has familiarized their leadership with the facts about public housing, then it is possible to raise finances when needed. The first funds may have to be raised

by donations from a few people. Then contributions can be obtained from organizations and from more individuals. When a potentially favorable group takes on active leadership and has a will to win and a plan for action, then the necessary money can be obtained: whether it be \$50, \$500, or \$5000. Finances will be needed for printing, postage, advertising, and maybe some radio time and billboards—though as many of these things as possible should be gotten free. A powerful campaign can be organized with all or nearly all volunteer workers and contributed publicity.

### *Newspapers Will Help*

The press is of primary importance at all times for the education of the general public about the facts of low-rent housing. It is worth much time on the part of the friends of public housing to get acquainted with the editors of local newspapers, key reporters, editorial writers, publishers.

In many successful local fights (Miami, for example), the editorial support of the local newspapers has been an important factor in the victory. A great many newspapers supported public housing when it was an issue before Congress. These papers doubtless can be counted on to support it as a local issue, too. Others have never taken a stand on public housing. Assume that they are open-minded and receptive to facts, then get the facts to them. But even a newspaper that opposes public housing in its editorial columns will give your side of the story a fair break in its news columns — if you see to it that you make legitimate news that is worth reporting.

Successful press relations in a local political crisis over public housing are usually the result of months or years of getting to know the members of the press by giving them facts and service and cooperation—not only when *they* request it but continuously, day in and out. But often with an immediate decision on the housing program coming up, there isn't time for such a long-term approach. Then people must be found who know the editors, the columnists, and the reporters of the local press. These friends must work to see that there is fair and full publicity. A special committee on publicity is a good

*Mr. and Mrs. Beaumont:*

**TIME TO JOIN OTHER TEXANS**

**IN**

# **LOW-COST HOUSING**

*Endorsed by:*

BEAUMONT MINISTERIAL ALLIANCE  
VETERANS COMMITTEE  
AM VETS  
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS  
JEWISH WAR VETERANS  
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF  
PARENTS AND TEACHERS  
AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR  
C. I. O.  
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CATHOLIC  
MEN  
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CATHOLIC  
WOMEN  
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF JEWISH  
WOMEN  
NATIONAL LUTHERAN COUNCIL  
UNITED COUNCIL OF CHURCH  
WOMEN  
FAMILY SERVICE ASSOCIATION  
OF AMERICA  
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNI-  
VERSITY WOMEN  
AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION  
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF  
THE UNITED STATES  
NATIONAL BOARD OF Y. W. C. A.

*Opposed by:*

NATIONAL REAL ESTATE  
AND BUILDERS' LOBBIES

*Adopted by These  
Texas Cities:*

CORPUS CHRISTI	AUSTIN
WICHITA FALLS	DALLAS
GALVESTON	HOUSTON
PORT ARTHUR	TEMPLE
SAN ANTONIO	TAYLOR
BROWNSVILLE	BORGER
FORT WORTH	DENISON
EAGLE PASS	McALLEN
WAXAHACHIE	PITTSBURG
McKINNEY	BONHAM
MERCEDES	SAN BENITO

*Fought In These  
Cities By*

**SAME OLD LOBBIES**

(In a recent popular vote Waco endorsed this very issue by a heavy majority.)

**CAN ALL THESE ORGANIZATIONS  
BE WRONG**

**- - AND THE NATIONAL LOBBY RIGHT?**

•

**CAN ALL THESE CITIES BE WRONG?**

**- - AND THE NATIONAL LOBBY RIGHT?**

•

# **VOTE FOR LOW COST HOUSING**

**AND A BETTER, CLEANER, HEALTHIER CITY FOR ALL OF US**

(Political Adv. paid for by Committee for Better Housing:  
A. J. Caburn, President.)

*Advertisement  
Placed by  
Friends  
of the  
Low-Rent  
Housing  
Program*

idea, for there is much work to be done. Civic leaders with community influence should be on this publicity committee.

News coverage is the key way of getting attention and keeping it. One western city made an all-time record. When a vote was coming up in the city council regarding participation in building a large veterans project, the subject of housing was kept on the front page of a local daily paper for 28 days. One eastern housing authority reported 163 news stories, editorials, and feature articles on its operations during one year.

News releases must be clearly written, short, and newsworthy to get the attention of an editor. The large majority of news releases are thrown away because they have an amateurish look or fail to capture attention in the lead sentence. The point of the story should be in that first sentence: the "who," "what," "when," and "where" of your message. Type the story, with double spaces between lines; use only one side of the paper; if possible, keep it under two pages; take it to the editor—or at least telephone him about it. If there are several papers, it is worth calling a press conference for an important story. Make it easy for the press to get the facts and try to get to reporters and editors *what* they want the *way* they want it.

The type of newsworthy events that rate on-the-scene coverage by the press are demolition programs and ground breakings—and evidences of the ravages of disease, delinquency, fires, etc., in slum areas.

Editorials friendly to the program are good to have from a publisher who has a fair attitude on public issues.

Also, paid advertisements in the local press are valuable. Near the end of educational campaigns, when the city council or general electorate may be about to vote upon a housing program—that's the time for advertising (see a sample such advertisement on page 13). Advertisements should be simple—clear—a few main facts—readable at a glance. Don't copy the ads used in other localities. Tailor your message to your local situation—make it a message that every local citizen will recognize as directed to *him*.

Subjects for press stories can include the following:

Human interest stories on slum living

Pictures of civic leaders making statements in support of  
your program  
Stories on forums and on general and committee meetings  
Housing progress by other cities in the state  
Payments in lieu of taxes made by local housing author-  
ities in the area  
Listing of all national and local groups in support of  
your stand  
Pictures of substandard dwellings and reports on re-  
search as to the low tax payments they yield  
Announcement of results of surveys of housing need

### *Special Publications*

Special publications, locally written and published, are a major local education and action job. But the writing of leaflets and pamphlets and special reports may take more time and skill than are immediately on tap in an emergency fight—so it may be necessary to use material published in other communities for similar purposes. The National Housing Conference can help you out with suggestions along these lines—although its advice is that there is nothing to equal a statement of facts tied in specifically to the local scene. Don't overlook every local resource before going outside your home town! Ask the health department for its publications on the why and where of disease in the community. Ask the police department for maps on crime and delinquency. Ask your tax collector for the true story on tax delinquencies in the slums. Get your council of social agencies to report its "problem" areas. Ask your municipal judges to state a set of facts on the influence of home and environment on the habits of youngsters. There are a multitude of local sources of facts behind your case—and you may turn up all kinds of leaflets and pamphlets produced locally that you can get for distribution.

Some of these publications, either those your committee publishes or those you beg or borrow, may be suitable for use in developing civic leadership, while others may be intended for broadcast distribution through neighborhoods and door to door.

### *Radio*

The radio should be used to the extent possible. Radio stations give some of their time to public service programs. It is often required that such time be used for a debate, with both sides represented. While such debates are sometimes stimulating, especially to the participants, more misinformation can be spread in 15 or 30 minutes than can be correctly relayed in many hours—and the oratorical victory often goes to the side that does the loudest asserting and the most interrupting. A planned series of programs about local housing facts may be more constructive—a series that includes human interest stories, facts on slums and their cost in dollars and lives, and the procedures of a low-rent housing program or a slum clearance project.

Interviews with all kinds of people can give freshness to the subject, including some with families living under intolerable living conditions, housewives, students, business leaders, and technicians in housing and planning.

### *Slogans*

Simple slogans are useful—the opposition certainly knows this, as spot announcements and repetition of misleading generalizations have been a prominent part of the radio technique used in attempting to influence the public against the low-rent housing programs. Where the friends of public housing decide to go in for “sloganeering,” however, it is urged that they devise one or two that are tied in specifically to local situations. Don’t follow the path of least resistance and take up a battle cry manufactured by someone else for some other city.

### *Talks*

Talks with small groups are an important part of both short-term and long-run campaigns. Talks should be friendly, factual, and with a human interest angle and should use good visual aids, such as colored charts and mounted photographs when available.

Pointing out the address where a baby has had a finger



bitten off by a rat, or where a family burned to death, or 135 people are living in a three-story tenement of 60 rooms—which pays only \$500 a year taxes—is at least equal in effect to a lot of statistics, although the statistics have a real importance too.

A “speakers bureau” should be gotten together whose members can become fully familiar with the situation. An outline filled in with a few major facts aids speakers. In short, the speakers should be well enough prepared to give clear and effective presentations on the community’s housing needs and the proposed program. It should be well publicized among program chairmen of all kinds that such speakers can be obtained through your committee.

### *Tours*

Tours of slums for small groups of civic leaders, officials, and members of clubs, are a valuable part of the month-in and month-out kind of plugging at the facts that makes a low-rent housing program possible. A women’s group in one town conducted several tours a week for many months. Teachers and students from high schools and colleges need to be exposed to the housing facts of life, especially those people from the better side of the tracks. The shock to their awareness has decisive effects on their previously uninformed elders. Facts and photos of slums and existing low-rental projects are sharp tools for cutting into the public consciousness and conscience.

### *Success Stories*

There is considerable variety to the kind of controversy that may develop in any community. For sample purposes, here are capsule reports on some successful local fights that have occurred since July 1949 and the enactment of the Housing Act of 1949.

#### **In Beaumont, Texas . . .**

the program was put to a vote in a general election. A virulent campaign was waged, featured by the same high-pres-

sure red scare tactics that had shortly before defeated public housing in another Texas city. The local opponents not only had the reported under-cover help of Frank Cortright, head of the National Association of Home Builders, but had the overt assistance of the talents of former Congressman Martin Dies. The district's present Congressman, J. M. Combs, pitched into the fight on the side of public housing, unmasking the true nature of the opposition. The voters gave their approval to public housing.

### **In Miami, Florida . . .**

the city council balked at every effort to bring the city into the public housing program. So local supporters decided to put the machinery for direct legislation by the people into constructive use. An initiative petition was circulated, calling for an election on the public housing issue. In short order, several times the required number of petitioners signed up. In this instance, strangely, the opposition sought to disqualify the movement for a referendum, even filing injunctions in the circuit and supreme courts, although, when the petition comes from its side of the fence, the procedure is heralded as good democratic practice. In any case, on June 27, 1950, the voters of Miami approved a slum clearance and low-rental housing program for the city by a vote of 14,246 to 10,410 after a campaign that had dropped lower and lower in the scale of responsible treatment of the issue as the voting date drew near.

### **In Oakland, California . . .**

the city council approved the program. The opposition displayed its vindictiveness by forcing a recall election directed at three members of the council who had voted for housing. The friends of public housing recognized the recall move as just as important to them as the council's original action. They rallied to the support of the beleaguered councilmen. Two of the three were retained on the council. The third was recalled by a 10-vote margin. Moral: city councils can change. The opposition recognizes this fact; the supporters should not forget it.

### **In St. Paul . . .**

the city council was strongly backed by the friends of public housing. A powerful drive was launched to persuade the council to reject the program. But the council stood firm. Then the opponents launched a push for a referendum. Public housing advocates carried on a well-organized phone-to-phone campaign to tell people what the petition was all about and what it really meant. As a result, the housing foes couldn't get enough bona fide signers to force an election.

### **In Little Rock, Arkansas . . .**

the issue went to an election. Here good ground-work by the local authority and the supporters of public housing paid off in a big way. The press covered the story—the *real* story—in detail and took strong editorial positions in favor of housing. A well-organized get-out-the-vote campaign was carried on, producing a heavy balloting all over the city. Public housing carried *every* precinct, even the silk stocking districts.

### *Take the Aggressive*

There is good evidence that the tactics of the opposition can be overcome. But if the truth is to prevail; if the lies, distortions, and appeal to pride and prejudice are to be ineffective, you too must have complete and well-organized *plan of action*.

You must have the *answer* to every argument. But you can't win simply by putting out fires after they have started. You've got to build some fires of your own.

### **In Newark, New Jersey . . .**

the opposition thought it was a cinch to win. When a hearing was held on housing, the opponents sent their big guns into action. But they found Newark's housing advocates were not content to let the real estate interests choose the issues. The housing supporters seized the initiative themselves. They put the finger on the national inspiration of the local opposition. They accused the local realtors of complicity with NAREB, challenged them to disassociate themselves from Herb Nelson's

"democracy stinks" views. Humiliated and unnerved by their exposure as tools of a national lobby, the opposition retreated in confusion. Another public housing fight was won.

You must put the opposition on the defensive—the spot it has staked out for you. The importance of a positive, open aggressive fight *for* housing can not be overstated. This is the way to victory.

### Sources of Quotations on Pages 5, 6

by Messrs. Nelson, Bodfish, West, Coogan

NELSON -- *Democracy stinks*: letter of May 31, 1949 to T. H. Maenner, then incoming president of National Association of Real Estate Boards, made public April 19, 1950 during hearings of House Select Committee on Lobbying Activities

NELSON -- *Mass man*: editorial in *Headlines*, newsletter of National Association of Real Estate Boards, June 9, 1947

BODFISH -- *Mob government*: bulletin of United States Savings and Loan League issued on July 8, 1943

WEST -- *Build your own*: testimony before House Committee on Banking and Currency, May 3, 1949, on H.R. 4009, Housing Act of 1949

WEST -- *Poor in poor-house*: testimony before House Committee on Expenditures in the Executive Department, June 6, 1946, on proposal to make the National Housing Agency permanent

COOGAN -- *Home owner "über alles"*: presidential message, *Washington Letter* of National Association of Home Builders, March 14, 1950

# The "Master Plan" of the Opposition

Shortly after the Housing Act of 1949 was passed, stories began to appear in the press relating how the groups that make up the anti-public housing lobby were filling war chests for local campaigns. Foremost among these groups are:

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REAL ESTATE BOARDS

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF HOME BUILDERS

UNITED STATES SAVINGS AND LOAN LEAGUE

NATIONAL RETAIL LUMBER DEALERS ASSOCIATION

The purpose of the war chests usually was described as an "educational campaign." The nature of these campaigns is now known. They are campaigns of obstruction and confusion, to be waged locally wherever a community considers making use of federal aid to provide housing for its low-income families.

These groups have issued several publications detailing how local campaigns are to be conducted. One of these master plans was issued by the National Association of Home Builders under the title "Public Housing on the Community Level."

## *The Home Builders Kit*

This kit of materials was first unveiled at an executive session of the association's annual convention in Chicago dur-



**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF HOME BUILDERS OF THE UNITED STATES**  
Suite 1116 - 1028 Connecticut Avenue, N. W.  
Washington 6, D. C.

Dear Fellow Home Builder:

For years your industry, through its National Association, has vigorously opposed the expansion of socialized public housing in this country. Home builders are convinced that it is an uneconomical and extremely dangerous method of meeting the housing need — a method which inevitably will destroy free economy.

Approval of Public Law 171 by a narrow margin transfers the fight from Washington to your front yard. What you do about it now will determine whether your business is to be preserved or is to become a function of a Governmental bureau.

At least until such time as the question again arises in Congress, it is you who must take action to oppose socialized public housing in your own city. It is the responsibility of your National Association to give you all the facts and to assist you wherever possible in your local fight.

The Congress stipulated in the public housing law that "in recognition that there should be local determination of the need for low rent housing to meet needs not being adequately met by private enterprise", the local governing bodies shall have the right to give or withhold certain necessary approvals (Sec. 15(7)). Thus, it is important to know the steps which the local public housing authority must go through in your home town before it can erect public housing.

Your city council will be called upon to approve projects and to grant tax waivers and make other necessary preliminary agreements. The time to act is when your housing authority starts to plan these projects. This is the time to focus the spotlight of public attention upon what is proposed and the effect it will have upon your city.

The material herein is designed to explain how public housing works and to give you suggestions as to how to proceed. Working with informed citizens groups and allied segments of the industry, we can do much to prevent unnecessary, inefficient and improperly managed public housing throughout the country.

Sincerely yours,

*Raymond M. Lockwood*  
Raymond M. Lockwood  
President

**Letter of  
Introduction . . .  
to the "kit" of anti-public housing  
ammunition provided its members  
by the National Association of  
Home Builders in February 1950**

ing February, 1950. In an introductory letter, NAHB's president told its local chapters to take the field against public housing and assured them of guidance and help from national headquarters.

"At least until such time as the question again arises in Congress," the kit declared, "it is you who must take action to oppose socialized public housing in your own city. It is the responsibility of your national association to give you all the facts and to assist you wherever possible in your local fights."

First off, the kit is designed to enable local opponents of public housing to kill off the program in their home towns. The kit spells out in detail what can be done to achieve this objective.

But the effort is not to stop there. The kit goes on to suggest dozens of ways in which a local program—even when *legally approved by the local government*—may be harassed, impeded, and obstructed. The drive thus becomes one aimed at upsetting local determinations even after they have been made.

### *It's a Long-Range Plan*

But there are still other, larger objectives, too. The kit stresses the value of "educating" a substantial proportion of the public into anti-public housing attitudes so that state enabling statutes may be crippled or repealed, thereby preventing localities from obtaining the benefit of federal legislation even if they desired to.

Beyond the maneuvers leading to state-wide bans on public housing, the Home Builders look to the day when the federal statute itself can be repealed. This long-range goal is also mentioned specifically in "Public Housing on the Community Level."

Far from being a campaign to make the anti-public housing views felt when the local determinations provided by law are being considered, the campaign is really aimed at eliminating the present right of a community to make its own determinations on public housing.

The initial step in a local opposition campaign, the kit

instructs its readers, is to form a "front" organization with a high-sounding, misleading name. It is to serve as a mouth-piece for its real estate backers. It will conceal both the identity and self-interest of the principal opponents. For window-dressing, the kit recommends using leading local citizens, hand-picked for the influence they may be able to exert over the local government.

### *Setting Up a "Front"*

Here's how the kit describes the organization of a front:

"In order to effectively present your point of view to the public, one of the first tasks should be to discover what organizations exist in your community which, if aware of the issues, would be interested in adding their voices to yours. Particularly in larger cities, there are already property owners' associations sometimes federated through a central organization. . . . These groups may very well be interested in forming a Citizens' Home Protection Committee to oppose public housing. Since the local building industry has such an important interest in housing, it would be natural for it to foster such a cooperative effort. *Press releases, public statements, etc., should then, of course, emanate from the Committee or its chairman.*

"Such an organization with the widest possible membership, including representative leading citizens of the community, will increase the consideration which city officials and/or your city council will give to the point of view you present to them."

### *Ten Step Process*

The kit then proceeds to explain how the front can resist and obstruct the local public housing effort. At least 10 major suggestions are made, geared to the principal steps in establishing a local program.

Although the first goal is to prevent local approval for a program, it is interesting to note that the recommended tactics outline a campaign of harassment to be carried out even when a locality decides to go ahead with a low-rent program.



Here, in summary, are the kit's directions for action at each stage in the life of a public housing program:

**1**—When an authority is analyzing local need for low-rent housing to support its application for federal aid, the front is to “force disclosure” of the authority’s findings. If possible, it is to clamor for a public hearing on these findings, in order to create a sounding board for its own propaganda.

**2**—It is to persuade the local council to withhold its approval of a preliminary loan in order to block planning work.

**3**—Controversy is to be continued by criticizing sites selected, the appraisals made of them, architects’ and engineers’ fees, and the estimated construction and operating costs.

**4**—The cooperation agreement is to be a major target for attack. The opposition is instructed to persuade the community that the value of the local contribution in tax exemption is a “loss” to the community and to make such irrelevant comparisons as relating the amount of payments in lieu of taxes with full taxes that would be paid if the project were built by private owners and housed higher-income families. The opponents, of course, steadfastly ignore the facts about the low taxes paid on slum properties—if taxes are paid at all and not left delinquent over long periods of years—and they never mention the high costs of police, fire, and health services required for slum areas. Yet when tax delinquencies or the low tax payments of such areas are computed and when the slum service costs are added up—the result in almost every instance is that the payments in lieu of taxes made for low-rental housing projects produce a far greater net profit to the community than the slum properties ever yielded.

**5**—When a construction contract is about to be awarded, the front is told to insist upon “disclosure” of costs before the award is made, to demand “proof” that these costs will not

be exceeded, and to contrast—unfavorably, of course—the estimated cost of public housing with the cost of private construction. All of which is based on the opposition's assumption that public housing construction costs more than private housing of equal standards and size, which is untrue.

6—Next, the front is to attempt to destroy the credit of the local housing authority loan. This is to be done by persuading bankers, brokers, and investment houses that public housing is a step toward "socializing" the country and, by dealing in local housing authority securities, they would be defeating their own interests.

7—The same approach is to be made in connection with permanent financing through bond issues.

8—In tenant selection, the front is to make a hullabaloo about forcing the local authority to adhere to all the requirements of law. The kit apparently makes this point because its authors assume in advance that the authority will violate the law if it is not kept under constant hostile scrutiny, a fear that is groundless in view of the clean record of the past.

9—The front also is to "make a public issue of rents." Although the meaning of this directive is made no clearer than that, it can be assumed that it means the front is to blow up as much dust as possible about rents, attacking them as either too high or too low, depending on which approach seems to have more value in sustaining controversy.

10—Finally, the opposition is advised to "force the authority to demolish an equivalent number of bad units." This proposed requirement is more stringent than the law calls for and it is impractical. What *will* be done, without "forcing" from the home builders, is that substandard units housing the number of families substantially equal to the number of public housing units will be either demolished, closed, or repaired

within five years after a program starts. That's the law. Except where slum sites are used for public housing, this job must be done by local law enforcement agencies. By suggesting that the housing authority be made responsible for it, the builders are trying to saddle it with an obligation it has neither the funds nor the power to fulfill.

From what has been shown thus far, it is obvious that the opposition is not going to stand or fall on the outcome of the local decision on participating in the program. It is going to carry on its opposition throughout the life of the program and try to extort a price for every step.

### *Hampet Cooperation Agreement*

The opposition sees the cooperation agreement as an opportunity to tie a variety of strings to the local program. The kit lists nearly a score of examples of "the types of provisions the local government can require." It is a curious list. Some of the proposals represent sheer waste motion, since they cover matters already fully detailed in federal law. Others, however, would be troublesome and perhaps impossible to administer. And all of them have a nuisance value because they would serve to keep public housing embroiled in public controversy.

Some of the suggestions appear innocent but are really masked methods for halting the program. For instance, it is suggested that the cooperation agreement be so written that the locality might withdraw tax exemption in some circumstances, such as failure to evict an ineligible tenant within a specified time. This requirement sounds reasonable. But since the federal law requires tax exemption and the government probably could not enter into a financial assistance contract on the basis of a conditional exemption, such a stipulation might well mean that there could be no public housing in the community at all.

A few of these suggestions are really surprising. It is suggested, for example, that "the incomes of all occupant families shall be posted once a year by name in the local city hall." This would be a Gestapo-like invasion of privacy for every family concerned, serving no purpose except to stigma-

*Can you afford to pay  
somebody else's Rent?*



**Read the **WHOLE TRUTH**  
about "Handout" Housing:**

---

**TO WIN . . .**  
***Stick to This Slogan—***  
*that's advice to opposition from*  
***United States Savings and Loan League***

tize the families. Imagine the outcry if you suggested posting the personal income tax return of each member of the local real estate board!

The lesson to be drawn from these suggestions is that the friends of housing must be especially alert to efforts to hamstring the program by hitching riders to the cooperation agreement. Be sure that none are adopted without being thoroughly examined and analyzed by qualified experts capable of assessing their real effect on the program.

### *The Referendum Drive*


Since the fight for housing has moved to the community level, there have been increasing instances of efforts to force the public housing issue out of council deliberations and into the heat of an initiative or referendum. This tactic, too, is straight from the kit. "When the issue of public housing has been presented to the public with full opportunity to understand the issues involved," the kit states, "it stands an excellent chance of being defeated. . . . Every effort should be made to get the question in one form or another presented to the public for a vote *preceded, of course, by full and adequate public discussion.*"

We have already seen that the kit is geared to the long-range objective of depriving local governments of their right to make up their own minds about public housing. If the opposition wants to deny this choice to the representatives of the people, why is it willing—even anxious—to risk a direct vote by the people?

The answer is in the underscored words: "*preceded, of course, by full and adequate public discussion.*" Translated into everyday English, this pious statement means an all-out propaganda drive to drum up prejudices and fears that will conceal the real issues. The behavior of the opposition in places where they have succeeded in forcing an election proves that it wants a chance to panic the people, not to obtain a considered verdict.

The willingness to resort to an election rests on the opposition's confidence that it holds all the aces in that game. It

CAN YOU AFFORD TO PAY SOME ONE ELSE'S RENT?




**KILL Political Housing!**

**VOTE "NO" ON REFERENDUM 3**

The Seattle Committee for Home Protection

Seattle

POLITICAL HOUSING IS *NOT* "FREE FEDERAL MONEY." YOU HAVE TO PAY FOR IT!



The federal money for political public housing comes out of ~~YOUR~~ pocket. Your city also has to shell out-out of your family's budget. *You pay the other fellow's rent!*

Niagra Falls

**POLITICAL HOUSING**

**WHO PAYS THE BILL?**

<b>YOU PAY</b> As a local taxpayer in increased property taxes	\$4283
<b>YOU PAY</b> As a federal taxpayer in increased income taxes	\$5222
<b>TENANT PAYS</b> To live in the same with all utilities paid	\$664

**CONGRESSIONAL CHAIRMAN**  
James W. Thompson

- There is no "free money" from the federal government.
- There is no "free money" from the federal government.
- There is no "free money" from the federal government.
- There is no "free money" from the federal government.
- There is no "free money" from the federal government.
- There is no "free money" from the federal government.

**KFDM 8:00 PM**  
LISTEN FOR JUST 30 MINUTES TONIGHT

**VOTE NO! APRIL 11th**

WATCH THIS SPACE TOMORROW

*"Political Housing" Slogan Gets A Work-Out By Opposition Too*

Beaumont

will have organized, well-heeled groups at its disposal. It will be able to buy the manpower and talent it takes to fill all media of communication with anti-public housing cant.

The strategy assumes, perhaps rightly, that the friends of public housing will have no such facilities at their disposal. The real strength of the public housing supporters lies in the evident need for the program, the soundness of its methods and objectives, and the appeal it has for all people of good will. The opposition both discounts these strengths and believes its superior tactical advantages will enable it to shout down the program's friends.

### *Try Anything?*

Confident in this analysis of its readers' advantages in a local fight, the kit makes this recommendation:

"Use the initiative and referendum in an attempt to do any one of the following:

"a. Repeal the state enabling act under which public housing authorities are established, and thus require the abolition of housing authorities and the liquidation of their assets;

"b. An amendment to the state constitution prohibiting use of public funds for the construction, operation or ownership by the municipality of housing accommodations;

"c. Seek a charter amendment containing similar provisions if your city has a charter form of government; and

"d. Force a public vote on whether or not a public housing project should be approved."

### *Kill It*

In simple words, *kill* the low-rent housing and slum clearance program at any point you can, by any means available . . . that's the advice the opponents of public housing are getting from their leaders.

# Can you afford to pay somebody else's RENT?

## MIAMI ADVERTISEMENT LUMPS ALL OPPOSITION SLOGANS TOGETHER

**HEY! STRANGER—  
PAY MY RENT!**

**WHY SHOULD I PAY  
YOUR RENT? I HAVE  
TROUBLE ENOUGH  
PAYING MY OWN!**

THAT'S RIGHT, BUT IF YOU  
DON'T WATCH OUT, YOU'LL WIND  
UP PAYING RENT FOR A LOT OF  
PEOPLE — SOME WHO MAKE MORE  
MONEY THAN YOU!

**HERE ARE SOME FACTS  
YOU SHOULD KNOW**

NOBODY LIKES SLUMS—  
EVERYBODY WANTS TO  
GET RID OF THEM!

PUBLIC HOUSING IS NOT NECESSARY  
FOR SLUM CLEARANCE. IT ISN'T EVEN  
NECESSARY TO GET FEDERAL AID FOR  
SLUM CLEARANCE. PUBLIC HOUSING  
IS JUST A FREE RIDE FOR OTHER  
PEOPLE AT YOUR EXPENSE.

**DON'T WE HAVE PUBLIC  
HOUSING IN MIAMI  
ALREADY?**

**YES— BUT IT  
DIDN'T HELP THE  
SLUMS ONE BIT!**

WHEN THEY BUILT THE LIBERTY CITY AND EDISON  
COURT TEN YEARS AGO IT WAS "TO ELIMINATE  
THE SLUMS". WELL, THOSE SELF-SAME SLUMS  
ARE THE ONES THEY NOW WANT TO "ELIMINATE" WITH  
THIS NEW HOUSING. — IN OTHER WORDS, PUBLIC  
HOUSING HAS DONE NOTHING FOR SLUM CLEARANCE  
IN MIAMI, FOR THE LAST TEN YEARS.

**WHAT IS PRIVATE  
FREE ENTERPRISE DOING  
ABOUT THE SLUMS?**

**PLENTY!  
LOOK AT THIS**

OVER 8,000 TEN CENT HOUSING UNITS FOR  
SLUM DWELLERS HAVE BEEN BUILT IN GREATER  
MIAMI SINCE JANUARY 1, 1950. THESE ARE  
REAL HOMES — NOT POLITICAL BARRACKS  
AT LEAST THAT MANY NOW ARE BEING PLANNED.  
MANY HUNDREDS OF SLUM SHOPS ARE BEING DE-  
MOLISHED RIGHT NOW. HUNDREDS MORE ARE  
BEING REHABILITATED. GO OUT INTO THE SLUM  
AREAS AND SEE FOR YOURSELF.

**WHERE WILL THEY PUT  
THESE POLITICAL  
HOUSING PROJECTS?**

**NOBODY KNOWS—  
THEY COULD BE  
IN YOUR  
PRECINCT**

THE ONLY PLACE THE PUBLIC HOUSERS SAY IT WOULD BE IS IN THE PRESENT  
SLUM AREAS. IT COULD BE IN ALHAMBRA, OR COCONUT GROVE, OR  
BRICKELL AVENUE OR CORAL WAY, IN LITTLE RIVER OR SHERWOODMAN.  
THEY WANT YOU TO VOTE FOR NON-SEGREGATED WHITE AND COLORED  
HOUSING — BUT THEY WON'T TELL YOU WHERE IT WILL BE  
DON'T YOU THINK YOU SHOULD KNOW BEFORE — NOT AFTER?

**WHO WOULD  
DECIDE WHO WOULD LIVE  
IN THESE  
HOUSES?**

**POLITICAL  
APPOINTEES  
WOULD  
DO THE  
CHOOSING**

THEY HAVE REFUSED TO  
LET INDEPENDENT AND  
IMPARTIAL RELIEF AGENCIES  
SCREEN APPLICANTS. IT'S VERY  
EASY TO GET MACHINE VOTES  
IN RETURN FOR CHEAP RENT.

**DON'T WE GET THIS  
FEDERAL MONEY FREE?**

**THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!  
YOU HAVE TO PAY  
TWICE TO GET IT!**

FIRST THROUGH INCREASED INCOME  
AND OTHER FEDERAL TAXES TO  
PAY THE INITIAL COST PLUS THE  
SALARIES OF THE BUREAUCRATS  
SECOND THROUGH INCREASED  
LOCAL TAXES TO PROVIDE  
POLICE, FIRE, SCHOOLS AND  
OTHER SERVICES FOR THESE  
TAX-FREE PROJECTS

**WHAT ABOUT THE OTHER  
BIG CITIES WITH SLUMS —  
DID THEY VOTE FOR  
SOCIALIZED HOUSING?**

**HERE'S THE RECORD**

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON	TURNED IT DOWN
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON	"
ST. PETERSBURG, FLA.	"
JACKSONVILLE, FLA.	"
DALLAS, TEXAS	"
AMARILLO, TEXAS	"
THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY	"
THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA	"
AND MANY, MANY MORE!	

**I CAN'T AFFORD TO PAY  
SOMEBODY ELSE'S RENT—  
HOW CAN I STOP IT?**

**VOTE  
NO  
TOMORROW!**

**I CAN'T AFFORD TO PAY  
SOMEBODY ELSE'S RENT—  
HOW CAN I STOP IT?**

**SOCIALISM**

**GO TO  
DANGEROUS  
ROAD  
TRAVEL AT  
YOUR OWN RISK**

COMMITTEE AGAINST SOCIALIZED HOUSING  
340 S. E. 1st STREET — C. M. O'NEILLER  
Pres. Nat. Adm.



## The Opposition in Action . . . Some sample situations

There has been enough experience with local housing fights in recent months to demonstrate that the strategy outlined in the preceding chapter is not a daydreamer's fancy. It is meant for action and is being used, with embellishments and with some success. It doesn't work every time. But if it works once—in your community—that's once too often.

Some communities have faced their local fights without knowing what they were up against. They didn't realize that they had more than a spontaneous, local opposition to reckon with. They didn't know the opposition was following a national strategy. If they sensed a pattern to the opposition's actions, they didn't catch on quickly enough to develop an effective counteraction.

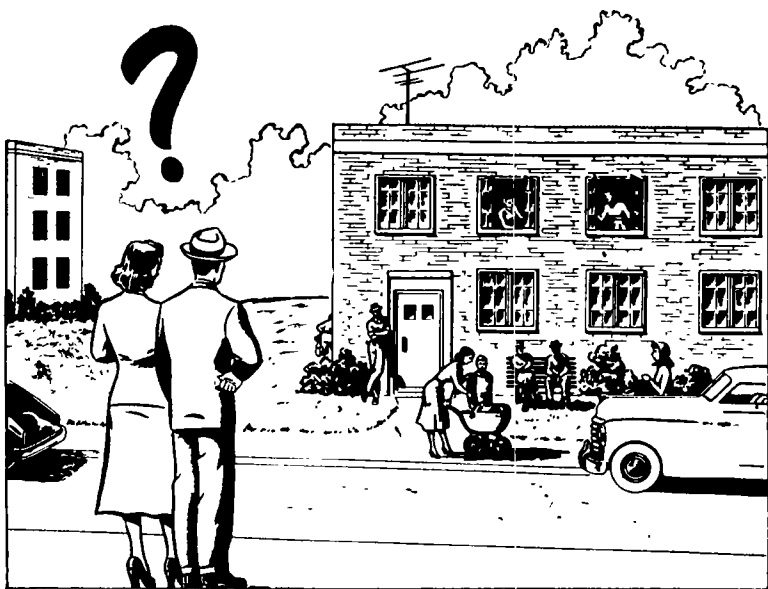
### *Don't Be Fooled*

In this chapter, some of the tactics actually used in tough local fights are described. They fit into the over-all strategy mapped out in the builders' kit. Watch for the same tactics to occur in your community—and be prepared to meet them. Most important, expose them. Americans don't like being fooled.

So far, all parts of the opposition's strategy have not yet been observed in action. Most fights to date have centered around such local decisions as establishment of a housing authority, approval of a preliminary loan application, or ap-

proval of a cooperation agreement. However, there are straws in the wind indicating that the full strategy will be carried out, down to a drive to repeal the federal statute. In California, for instance, a petition was successfully circulated, putting on next November's ballot a trick initiative proposal, disguised as a "local option" measure but really drawn to prevent any public housing in the state in the future. It requires the approval of a majority of qualified electors for *every* housing project. This proposal—in the name of democracy—is a fantastic perversion of democracy and an administrative monstrosity.

## **YOU'LL PAY \$\$\$\$ FOR THEIR RENT**



**A MUCH-USED ADVERTISEMENT**

### *Lessons Learned*

Even though the push has just begun, certain lessons have been learned from local experiences. Here are the main conclusions that can be drawn to this point:

#### **The low level of actual fights out- does the instructions in the "kit."**

The approaches outlined in the kit seem fair and high-minded in comparison to the exceedingly low level of the real opposition tactics in local fights. There simply is no limit to the virulence, demagoguery, and downright dishonesty that is used when the chips are down.

#### **It's a "canned" campaign — "prefabricated" slogans — advertisements — billboards are on tap at national headquarters.**

The Home Builders' kit does not hint of the above fact, except in its general promise of "help." But it is known that the slogans, advertising, brochures, cartoons, and similar materials being used to fight the program in one part of the country are identical with those being used in other parts. It is assembly-line stuff—not a home product. The "canned" nature of these materials helps reveal the outside inspiration of the local opposition and discredits its pretenses to local origin.

A second "kit," released in June 1950 by the United States Savings and Loan League, carries reprints of many of the "canned" slogans, advertisements, etc., and points out those that have been most effective. It also carries three "canned" editorials to be used "in reaching different elements of the population in the community . . ."—one of them describing "sound logical reasons why government housing is wrong"; the second, an appeal "to the statistical-minded individual"; the third, "'emotional' reasons why government housing should be defeated." A "canned" news story and speech are also provided.

This kit advocates "continual emphasis" on the "paying

someone else's rent" theme. The "socialism" theme, the League states, is hard for the average citizen to grasp—its use, they say, has "not been spectacularly effective."

### **Leaders imported from Washington make "grass-roots" slogans a joke.**

In numerous cases, leading figures in the Washington real estate lobby have been spotted taking an active part in local fights. Frank Cortright, executive vice-president of the National Association of Home Builders, is reported to have been on hand in Beaumont, Texas, when a referendum was held there in April. Public housing won that fight and Cortright is said to have gone back to map further stalling tactics. Calvin Snyder, executive head of the Realtors' Washington Committee of the National Association of Real Estate Boards, was reported in the Savannah, Georgia, fight. In Roanoke, Virginia, Albert Payne of NAREB appeared at a public hearing before the city council. When he was obliged to identify himself as a Washington lobbyist, the council told him to step down and be quiet. In Portland, Maine, Rodney Lockwood of the Home Builders was the star attraction at a public rally. In Madison, Wisconsin, on the eve of a crucial city council vote, both NAREB's Nelson and NAHB's Cortright rolled into town and sought to strike terror into the councilmen's souls with stories of socialist England and Marxian revolution—but the council refused to be scared.

### **Birds of a feather are getting together.**

By back-scratching and log-rolling, the opposition attempts to suck into its own camp other groups with other axes to grind. NAREB's Herbert U. Nelson ("democracy stinks") is a long-time advocate of amalgamating into the anti-public housing front all groups that feel they have something to fear. In South Bend, Indiana, for instance, the local medical association took a public stand against housing, apparently in return for a promise of real estate opposition to "socialized medicine."

In California, even the officials of an interdenominational

religious group have been inveigled into doing the real estate lobby's dirty work. The church group's opposition to public housing was apparently pledged in the expectation that they would get real estate aid in putting over an anti-saloon measure. Elsewhere, efforts have been made to line up on the opposition side local chapters of organizations whose national bodies backed public housing before Congress.

**Anything goes — nothing is too petty to  
be grist for the opposition propaganda mill.**

The opponents are very happy to shift the spotlight of publicity away from such real issues as the need for public housing to inconsequential and trumped-up issues. In one locality, a considerable ruckus was created over the number of automobiles operated by the local authority. This charge had nothing to do with the point in question but it did have a nuisance value and did succeed in luring public attention away from the need for public housing in the community, while it forced public housing advocates to squander part of their energy in fighting an irrelevant argument.

As noted above, it is not only the home builders' kit that maps out the strategy of opposition. In addition to its new "kit," the United States Savings and Loan League had earlier done its share in plotting a course of action and in giving its member institutions the "pitch" on how to go about undermining the facts of public housing. Back in 1949 the League issued a pamphlet carrying the title "Government Ownership of Homes—Some Facts About the Dangers of Public Housing."

Large headings in this pamphlet declare:

PUBLIC HOUSING IS INFLATIONARY

PUBLIC HOUSING WON'T CLEAR SLUMS

PUBLIC HOUSING SPURS POLITICAL FAVORITISM

PUBLIC HOUSING COSTS MORE THAN PRIVATE BUILDING

PUBLIC HOUSING BOOSTS REAL ESTATE TAXES

PUBLIC HOUSING DOESN'T HELP THE NEEDIEST FAMILIES

PUBLIC HOUSING WON'T RELIEVE THE HOUSING SHORTAGE

In every local housing fight, the opposition takes its pick of themes of this kind and then drums them into the public's ears in a heavy, monotonous chant. The favorite themes seem to be:

**"You pay the other fellow's rent!"**

**"Public housing is socialism!"**

**"It means more taxes!"**

These catch-phrases, of course, are lies. But the opposition counts on these lies to win for them. By repeating the lies over and over again, dinning them into the public mind, and out-shouting every effort to disprove them, the opposition hopes to triumph.

Of course, the lies are not always expressed the same way. The rule is to make the lie as big as the traffic will bear. Its size depends on the prevailing degree of contempt for the local intelligence. In some localities, the opposition assumes the public will not gag on such whoppers as "public housing will destroy America," "it will hurt veterans," it will "wreck the school system," or—honest!—"public housing will harm the churches!"

### *"Red" Scare*

All these horror stories represent nothing more than an attempt to defeat public housing by linking it with "communism"—with any or all anti-democratic world forces now of such concern to the American public.

The arguments about taxes stand high in the favor of the opposition. Indeed, the Home Builders' kit itself rates the tax exemption issue as "the most important means available" for beating the anti-public housing drum.

They have found it possible to play a number of variations on this theme. A favorite is to translate this painless form of local contribution into a "loss" for the local taxpayers. Not content with selling the phony notion that you can lose something you don't have, the next step is to claim, despite

**张其成**

**HERE ARE THE FACTS ABOUT SOCIALIZED HOUSING:**

## 2 YOUR LOCAL TAXES WILL BE USED FOR PUBLIC HOUSING

3. **EXTRAVAGANT SOCIALISM**  
The Public Housers are permitted to spend as much as \$2,500.00 per room, which does not include cost of land, utilities, streets, etc. I am glad to afford to help pay for a \$12,500.00 unit for a 'FREE' home for our family with a home

average cost of over \$200 a month. The program the local Housing Authority may run without the consent of City Council or YOU, the TAXPAYER.

**IS THIS A STEP TOWARD A SOCIALISTIC STATE?**

**IS THIS REALLY PUBLIC HOUSING?**

**NOT GIVE THEM FREE**

**USES? IT'S CHEAPER!**

**COST**  
**\$8,000**

A public housing unit costs the government \$17,000. It supports it for 40 years. It could build neat houses and give them away for only \$8,000. Does this make any sense? Say NO or YES.

**Tell Your City Council You Don't Want It**  
**SAVANNAH REAL ESTATE BOARD**

Here is the "Joker clause" in the agreement between the Public Housing Authority and the City of Savannah... an agreement the Housing Authority wants your aldermen to sign!

PROVIDED HOWEVER THAT UPON FAILURE OF THE LOCAL  
AUTHORITY TO MAKE ANY SUCH PAYMENT IN LIEU OF  
TAXES NO LITIGATION AGAINST ANY PROJECT OR ASSETS OF THE  
LOCAL AUTHORITY SHALL ATTACH.

sign at Atlantic and the the COLLECTIBLE agreement like the Authorities discont ne about it

**TAX Payers! Veterans!**  
**Property Owners! WHAT IS YOUR ANSWER?**

**"NO" APRIL 4th.**

all experience, that public housing will result in higher local taxes. This is "proved" by the shameless assertion that the *value* of the local contribution represents hard cash to be paid out by local taxpayers. Then, to move on to the next fantasy, the claim is made that public housing will mean more federal taxes. By this time, the lie has become so big that there is no attempt to support it with "proof." It's supposed to stand by its own enormity.

The argument that "you pay the other fellow's rent" has been relied on most heavily in the more sophisticated communities where the false cry of "socialism" was not likely to stampede the populace (recall the USSLL advice mentioned above). It is a blatant and fallacious appeal to supposed self-interest. It must be countered with convincing demonstrations that "you pay for the slums."

### "Racism"

These are the major themes of the opposition. But they do not exhaust the repertoire. For southern cities, the flight from facts produces such appeals as "public housing means the end of segregation in Savannah." In other communities, there are thinly-veiled appeals to other prejudices—class, race, and religion—directed at "the type of family" public housing accommodates.

Elsewhere, there is a deliberate effort to stimulate false fears among *home owners*. Often this takes the form of claims that approval of a public housing program would lead to widespread condemnation of owner-occupied homes, even in the best residential districts. This can be made into a threat to the veteran's equity in his GI-financed home. It can even be used to drive residents of owner-occupied slum properties to hysterical opposition. In Oakland, California, for instance, sound trucks toured slum areas bellowing, "Your home will be torn down." In Seattle, the opposition published fanciful maps blocking out "possible public housing sites" in the city's best residential areas.

Even the business cycle is not safe from the threat of public housing, to hear the opposition tell the story. Instead of contributing to the community's economic well-being, it



would lead to a deadly inflation in labor and materials prices, inevitably followed by an economic collapse that would leave the city ruined!

A particularly deceitful stunt was worked in a southern city. There a banker called the local housing authority to inquire about over-income families. The authority director told the banker that these families couldn't find other homes within their means. The banker said: "Give me a list of these families and their incomes. I will see to it that homes are located for them." The director agreed—only to find the entire list published in a full-page newspaper advertisement purporting to "prove" that public housing was a fraud on the community!

### *Home Owner Is Target*

The singling out of the home owner is a technique employed in the use of all of the above themes. He is always pictured as the man who pays all of the community's bills, exerts all of the public-spirited effort to improve and beautify his home town. *Tenants'* needs, attitudes, contributions to the community are completely ignored. By implication, the impression is created that tenants are a worthless lot that get a glorious free ride on the hard-won tax money of the home owner.

This device really pays off for the opposition, since home owners are better organized than tenants—more "reachable" in a number of ways. The lobby tries to cast small home owners in the role of martyrs who are carrying the heavy burdens of the community and they often respond quickly to the "scare" lines thrown to them. The friends of public housing might well take a hint from this opposition tactic and see that not only enlightened home owners but also the tenants of the nation are brought into the fight: on *their* side.

So . . . these are some of the tricks and tactics that have been encountered to date in communities throughout the nation. These and others may be tried in your home town. Only an alert and active group organized to accomplish the building of a low-rent housing program can meet and overcome such a campaign.

# ***A FAVORITE OPPOSITION CATCH-LINE***

**THERE ARE TOO MANY  
"JOKERS"  
IN THE  
SOCIALIZED  
PUBLIC  
HOUSING  
DEAL!**



The above advertisement, with the text briefed below, has been used in campaigns in such widely separated areas as Lubbock, Texas and Roanoke, Virginia. The advertisements point out six "jokers" in the public housing deal, as follows:

- 1—Public housing adds to everyone's local taxes
- 2—Public housing reduces home owners' property values
- 3—Public housing decreases the value of rental property
- 4—Public housing is a threat to every business and profession in the city in which it is built
- 5—Public housing penalizes those with thrift and faith in their own abilities
- 6—Public housing is federally controlled—the local government is a Washington "stooge"

# You MUST Understand . . the "what" and "why" of public attitudes

Your task is persuading your community to understand the truth about public low-rent housing. To do so, you must understand and appreciate how your neighbor thinks—what he believes in, what he hopes for, what he fears.

Every person has a set of private attitudes that conditions his opinions about public questions, including public housing. The same person often has contradictory attitudes. Some of his attitudes predispose him to favor public housing, but others prejudice him against it.

## *Fear Is Opponent's Tool*

The anti-public housing lobby is skilled at exploiting those attitudes that can produce an unfavorable opinion of public housing. It plays on fears, insisting that public housing will bring about whatever the individual is afraid of. As a result, his antagonistic attitudes are reinforced and he decides he's against public housing.

But the same individual can proceed from the same set of attitudes to a decision in favor of public housing. If what he hears and sees about public housing reinforces his favorable attitudes and weakens his antagonistic ones, he decides public housing is okay.

That's where you come in. Your job is to make use of the individual's latent attitudes approving public housing and to help him overcome his disapproving attitudes. You don't

have to pander to fears to do this job. The attitudes that favor public housing are positive attitudes, matters of democratic faith and high aspirations. Let the opposition deal in fright. We'll take progress.

In this chapter, we are going to discuss some common attitudes—both adverse and favorable—that affect opinions about housing. Before we get to specifics, however, there are two general observations to be made.

### *Below the Surface*

First, these attitudes are seldom clearly expressed. They lie beneath the surface, forming the foundation for what people say and do. That's why they are so powerful. An adverse attitude, even if never expressed, can kill off your housing program just as effectively as any device the opposition can concoct.

Attitudes are particularly important if the housing issue is to be decided by referendum. In such a situation, most voters may never have the benefit of a face-to-face discussion with an informed advocate of public housing. They have to rely on their attitudes for guidance. In other words, the individual's judgment is shaped by emotions rather than by a rational weighing of pros and cons.

The second point to remember is that some attitudes are a lot stronger in one locality than in another. As an obvious example, attitudes on race may be more powerful in a Georgia community than in a town in Maine. Citizens who are trying to get low-rent housing accepted in their community should do their best to detect the attitudes that have the most significance in their locality and decide which ones are most worth concentrating on. In a short battle, it will be impossible to cover them all. That's a long-term educational job that should go on year in and year out. For the short haul, pick the points that will pay off for better housing.

### *Basis of Support*

There are two strong, positive attitudes commonly held



by most people, all over the country, that can be counted upon to form the basis for support for public housing. They can be stated very briefly:

**1—People shouldn't have to live in the degradation of the slums**

**2—Something must be done about it**

If you have any doubt about the power of these two convictions, just remember that they are so widely held that even the most violent segments of the real estate lobby at least pay lip service to them. The lobby feels these attitudes so keenly that it tries to come up with solutions other than public housing. So far, they haven't had any luck but their efforts in this direction over several years are eloquent testimony to the potency of the attitudes.

As we have said earlier, you can't count on any of these attitudes being freely expressed or consciously acknowledged. They stay latent until some action or situation touches upon

<p>The "Faceless Man"</p>  <p><b>SMASH Selfish Interests</b></p> <p>↓</p> <p><b><i>Vote for 2,000 Low Rent Homes</i></b></p>	 <p><b>HE OWNS THE SLUMS!</b></p> <p><b>LET'S SMASH HIM WITH A Smashing Vote</b></p> <p><b><i>for 2,000 new homes . . . 2,000 fewer slum dwellings!</i></b></p>
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**Portland Used This Approach**

them. Then they become conscious opinions that form the basis for action.

To activate the widespread revulsion for the slums, you must dramatize them so that people can see them with their own eyes. You must also point out the effect of the slums on the people who live in them and on the community as a whole.

To activate the willingness to "do something," you must provide a clear course of action. This condition is ready-made wherever a community is facing a decision on public housing. The way to "do something" about the slums is to approve the public housing program.

### *Public Favors Public Help*

Incidentally, don't be afraid that the people in your town will be willing to "do something" but not willing to have their government "do something" to the same end. According to several opinion polls conducted in recent years, people *do* feel that it is appropriate for their government to act to provide better housing. As a matter of fact, people feel that it is proper for the *federal* government to do the job. You don't have to ask them to go that far. The public housing program enables local governments to do the job. The point is that resistance to public action in the housing field isn't nearly so prevalent as the real estate lobby would have you believe. Remember, a majority of the men the people elected to represent them in Congress voted for public housing.

In addition to these fundamental favorable attitudes, there are a number of related subsidiary attitudes that should not be overlooked. These are the everyday attitudes that favor community improvement and the realization of the composite aspirations of most groups of people for a better life. All of these attitudes can rally opinion on the side of public housing: "wipe out the slums," "beautify the city," "make our town a better place to live," and "help thy neighbor."

The attitudes discussed in the preceding section can form the basis for the positive side of your campaign. But, since you do face opposition, there must also be a rebuttal in which you overcome the arguments advanced by the opponents.

There is a considerable variety of arguments you may be

called upon to meet. Which ones will prove important in your community depends upon the opposition's estimate of the significant attitudes it can exploit for its purposes.

In general, the attitudes the lobby plays upon may be grouped in four categories: political fears, property fears, racial fears, and class fears. Because it is always harder to break down somebody else's arguments than to set up your own, we are going to discuss these adverse attitudes in some detail.

### *It's "Socialism"*

Americans have a long and honorable tradition of resistance to tyranny. The state of the modern world has made them hypersensitive to any threat to their democratic

## Can you afford to pay someone else's rent?



Hardly seems reasonable, does it that you should be required to pay taxes, maintenance, payments on your home, income taxes, etc., etc., and then, in addition, be REQUIRED TO KICK IN FOR HALF OF SOMEONE ELSE'S RENT . . . and their share of local taxes, too.

THIS IS ONLY PART of the bill you will pay if Public Housing is accepted in Portland. You will have to pay top-heavy bureaucratic administration costs and other unreasonable and wasteful charges that always crop up when government plays landlord.

*See inside* ➡

*The "scare-'em-with-socialism" slant as used in Portland, Oregon*

freedoms. The opposition plays upon this fundamental attitude by crying that public housing is "communistic" or "socialistic."

A dictionary and a little logic would knock this attack into a cocked hat, if it were merely a matter of intellectual argumentation. But these words are "smear" words today, used because they call up an emotional response rather than a rational one.

You can't brush off this kind of attack just by citing the strong support given public housing by men like Senator Taft, Senator Vandenberg, or any of the well-known conservatives in Congress and state legislatures who have taken their stand on the side of public housing. The best reply is a full factual explanation of how public housing actually is built and operated in this country. It is a system thoroughly compatible with a capitalistic, free enterprise system at every step of the way. Local real estate men will get fees for appraising and acquiring the land. Private architects will be hired to design the buildings. A private enterprise contractor, the lowest and best bidder, will get the contract to build the buildings. He will sub-contract various parts of the job to other private firms. They will buy their supplies and materials from private businessmen. The carpenters and bricklayers will not be government employees but "private enterprise" workmen, operating under the same employers as they would if a department store or a hotel were being built. Permanent financing will come from bonds sold by the local housing authority to private investors.

### *Tell the Story*

The commissioners of the housing authority will be prominent local citizens. The mayor will pick them—not a "commissar" in Washington, as the opposition likes to imply. If they are already picked, let it be widely known who they are. It will be recognized that they are not "socialists" or "communists." Country-wide they are generally leading businessmen, churchmen, civic group leaders, responsible union representatives.

And the people who will live in the housing won't be wards of the state or pawns of bureaucrats trying to socialize

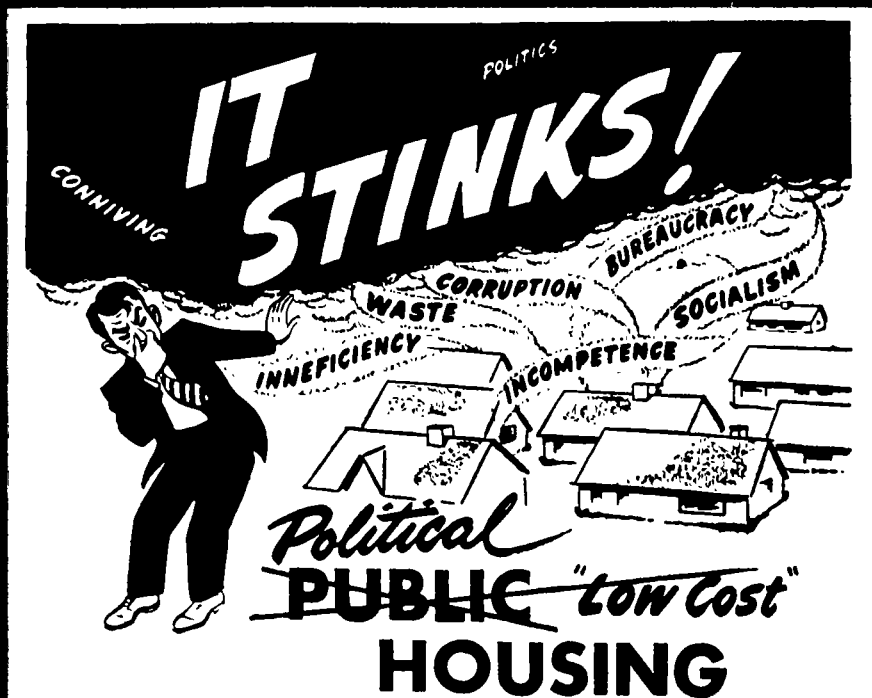


the nation. They will be parents trying to raise their kids in decent surroundings so they will have a fair chance at growing up into law-abiding Americans.

There's nothing foreign about doing these things. It's just teamwork, a lot of people working together to do something good that couldn't be done at all unless we did pull together. We teach our kids the virtues of teamwork. What's wrong with practicing it?

### *It's Political*

Sometimes political fears are not expressed in terms of foreign ideologies but in the simpler view that "housing and politics shouldn't mix." This feeling, of course, could be raised just as logically against a lot of other things, such as FHA, HOLC, zoning laws, and building codes. People aren't



*The "scare-em-with-politics" stunt uses plenty of "corruption" charges*

against these things, of course. It's just that public housing sounds a little different to them.

To combat this attitude, explain that the housing authority is controlled by commissioners who are unpaid, non-partisan people who serve as a contribution to their community's welfare. An elected official appoints them but he can't dictate to them or fire them. The city government may refuse to authorize a cooperation agreement but, if it does approve one, it can't control the award of contracts or the admission of tenants.

If there is another local government body—such as a school board, a drainage district run by commissioners, or a library board—some comparable type of body that has earned public respect, the commissioners of which serve under circumstances that parallel the housing authority commissioner system, try to get that parallel firmly established in the public mind.

Public housing all over the country has been administered with an outstanding degree of honesty, efficiency, and freedom from political interference. Although this statement is true, the people who say "housing and politics shouldn't mix" can't be approached with this record. Don't get mad at them. Just give them a local approach that they understand and believe.

### *It Destroys Property Values*

A lot of anti-public housing propaganda tries to capitalize on the fears many people feel for the security of their property.

Sometimes this is expressed in the words "public housing will destroy property values in the neighborhood." Now, there is plenty of evidence to the contrary. If you have a real demonstration in your community of how a project has revived a declining neighborhood, you can point to it. If you don't have a handy exhibit of this kind, it is perfectly honest and credible to argue that the new vitality of a new residential development renting at rents its occupants can afford to pay—and kept in top maintenance because the "owner" (that is, the public) will have no temptation to neglect repairs in order to add to his profits—such an addition to a neighborhood will give a new

lease on life to the entire vicinity, bringing new business to its businessmen and halting the march of blight on surrounding properties. A public housing project is really an investment in the future of its neighborhood, not a blow to it.

A related argument sometimes heard is the one that "public housing builds cheap, flimsy buildings." This attitude is frequently encountered in communities where the local housing authority operates nothing but temporary war housing, which is cheap and flimsy. Sometimes it pops up in communities that have no public housing at all.

You can't "argue" with this mistaken idea. You must create a more realistic counter-idea. Visual education methods are best for this purpose. Pictures of good low-rent housing projects now being operated in communities nearby and roughly comparable in size can be used effectively either by citizens' groups directly or in feature material for local newspapers. Even more effective, for the people who can make a trip and for the groups they can influence, are visits to nearby housing projects. Such visits not only have the merit of showing that low-rent housing is well constructed and an asset to the community but have the additional advantage of letting people actually see the children of poor families growing up in a decent environment. A picture is worth a

## DO YOU WANT A HOUSING PROJECT IN *Your* NEIGHBORHOOD?

### READ WHAT THESE PORTLAND CITIZENS SAY ABOUT "LOW RENT" HIGH COST HOUSING.

"On May 19th, we, the citizens of Portland, decide whether we want Portland to continue to be the 'City of Homes' and the 'City of Homes' or just another Housing Project with a name."

"... the more housing units the more we're do-wells. The big question is: Where does this sort of thing come?"

"This writer has an indelible memory of what is what under government by bureaucracy — particularly the Russian brand. . . . More and more the government seizes upon with its colored tentacles. . . . Let's not be blinded by a government having 'low' rents."

"... I do not believe the government even has a right to anything else except the privileges granted it under the original form of American government."



*The "scare-the-property-owner" slant preys on human frailty*

thousand words—and a visit is better than a picture. Local authorities are generally glad to cooperate in arranging such visits. Information about the nearest projects can be obtained from the National Housing Conference or one of the 11 field offices of the Public Housing Administration.

It is a tribute to the versatility of the opposition—if not its consistency—to note that it sometimes argues that public housing builds “extravagant” or “luxurious” accommodations. Here again, visual evidence is the best reply. If there are any private housing developments built in your community at about the cost of public projects, you could make comparisons. And you would find that the public projects have no “frills” of any kind—that economy has been the watchword: long-range economy. The materials and methods of building used for the public projects, and the equipment installed, you will find are of a highly durable quality—used because of their ability to stand up under use for the 40 to 60 years that the project is expected to be in use. Further, it will probably be found that the public units are larger than the private ones because they are built for families with children and thus they have more bedrooms than the average private development. It will be found, in short, that mere dollars and cents figures can not offer a full basis for comparison and that the charge of “luxury” and “extravagance” just can’t stand the light of day.

### *The Race Issue*

Public attitudes toward racial minorities are at the heart of one of the big social and moral problems of our times. This problem affects a great many things, including housing. The treatment of minorities is a big problem because there are a wide range of attitudes on the subject.

The opposition to public housing has shown that it is not above stirring racial issues in its effort to defeat public housing. In more than one locality, the race issue has been deliberately injected into local fights because it is known that racial considerations can be used to confuse many people and divert their attention from the real issue, which is providing housing for people who need it.

# **PUBLIC HOUSING MEANS AN END OF RACIAL SEGREGATION IN SAVANNAH!**

*This Happened In California:*

**From the 15th Report of the Committee On Expenditures, 80th U. S. Congress**

This quotation is taken from the 15th Intermediate Report of the Committee on Expenditures of the House of Representatives, 80th Congress, Second Session, House Report No. 2351.

" . . . Another tenant was Enos Baker, who is identified in the F. B. I. records as a Negro Communist leader. He is not a war veteran. In the company of a white woman employee of PHA, Miss Evelyn Akerstein, who was also the paid secretary of the Communist Party in the San Diego area, Baker was held in a raid on the Government property one night by the police vice squad, but no arrests were recorded. The young woman was allowed to resign from PHA, but Baker was not moved out of the project. Later Baker took up with another white woman, Mrs. Yvonne Willard, who lived in the project. Mr. Willard, the white husband, left the premises with his son and obtained a divorce. Baker then married Mrs. Willard in Tijuana, Mexico. At the time of the investigation they continued to live together in the Government project. After the Tiajunana marriage ceremony, PHA issued a new lease to Mr. and Mrs. Baker, **DESPITE THE FACT THAT THE STAFF POINTED OUT THE CALIFORNIA LAW AGAINST MISCEGENATION AND THAT THE PHA REGULATIONS FORBID NEW LEASES TO ANY BUT VETERANS SO LONG AS ANY VETERAN REMAINS ON THE WAITING LIST FOR HOUSING.**"

## **DON'T LET IT HAPPEN HERE!**

**Insist that there be no further delay . . . INSIST ON A  
REFERENDUM NOW! Phone, write or wire the City  
Council TODAY!**

## **SAVANNAH REAL ESTATE BOARD**

ADVERTISEMENT

We are not going to try to tell you how to solve your community's racial problem. But we can make suggestions about how to take this problem into account in your fight for public housing.

In the first place, we Americans believe in fair play for everybody. Public housing should be presented, therefore, as providing an opportunity to live in a decent home to every low-income family regardless of race. If your community happens to have a larger proportion of Negroes among its low-income families living in slums than white families, public housing in your community will undoubtedly turn out to have a similar distribution among its tenants: a result that will come about not from any consideration of color but, rather, from the need for good housing and the exercise of fair play.

It will be constructive to make the community aware of the consequences to the majority group when any minority group is ill-housed. This approach is a practical one that doesn't involve moral judgments or labeling anybody good or bad on the basis of his views about race. Bad housing for some of us costs too much for the rest of us. No matter what races may be involved, it is a fact that disease thrives in bad housing. Disease is contagious and does not respect color lines. Crime breeds in bad, overcrowded houses. The victims of criminals—juvenile or adult—are among all groups. Bad housing is costly to the city and drains away taxes. All races foot the bill. Emphasis on such ideas as these will steer everyone clear of the "race issue" trap and help you stick to talking housing.

The opposition to public housing may try to scare you by saying that public housing will be used to introduce minority group families into sections of the town where they have not lived before. Expanding populations of all racial groups require opportunities for expansion, either into new housing or into the existing housing supply or both. In the last analysis, just how that expansion is to be handled and, especially, what part public housing is to play in it, is a determination to be made by the local housing authority and the citizens of your town.

## *"Shiftless" People*

Sometimes one hears that "public housing might ruin our neighborhood." This is a vague fear that often affects people who feel strong pride in the homes they own themselves, their neighborhood, and their part of town.

Such people feel that homeowners are the backbone of America, that they scrimp and save to make a down payment and then have to struggle for years to pay off a mortgage. Certainly the government shouldn't do anything that might jeopardize their investments. And aren't these projects going to bring "undesirables" into our neighborhood? Shiftless people? Wife beaters, immigrants, criminals perhaps? Won't they ride "our" buses, use "our" parks, send their delinquent children to "our" school?

These people just don't understand what a low-income family is. You can't argue them out of their misconception. The opposition will be arguing loudly to reinforce their fear—and have the advantage of playing to a strong emotional attitude.

The best approach is to show concretely what kinds of families will be living in public housing. Show them specific families, not statistics. People who know slum families well have a greater admiration for them than for many families that are better off. Many slum dwellers put up a terrific fight to raise their children decently, despite almost insurmountable odds. Social workers, pastors of slum parishes, school teachers, public health nurses know these facts. You must find a way to get their knowledge across to the public. Once the facts are known, it is likely that the people who previously feared the low-income families will become ashamed that their community tolerates such conditions. The contrast between their own situations and those of slum families will be painfully clear. Their consciences will guide them to supporting decent housing for people not quite as well off as they are.

One caution about how you do this educational job: publicity on individual families has to be handled very carefully. Scrupulous accuracy, honest treatment, and due regard for the sensibilities of the family involved are essential. Such a family may have a healthy morale that enables it to carry on its

fight against its environment. Don't overwhelm it with mawkish sympathy. Give the family credit for what it is doing, but don't encourage demoralizing self-pity and don't give it a persecution complex. It's having a rough enough time without that further handicap.

### *The Sites*

The question of whether public housing should be built on slum sites or vacant land has proved so troublesome in many localities that it deserves special mention here. The opposition has made a point of insisting that "public housing should be built only where slums are now."

Because public housing is so closely related to slum clearance—you can't clear slums without providing housing for the people who live in them—the public tends to think of them as one and the same thing. Actually, it makes good sense to build public housing now on vacant land wherever it is available. That procedure makes it possible to move ahead with slum clearance and it is also cheaper and quicker. In many cases, the opposition is urging use of slum sites only because they know this will create tremendous obstacles for public housing.

In the long run, the only way to cure the misconception that public housing should go only on slum sites is to get a decent city planning program completely accepted by the community. Nobody *planned* that the slums should be where they are. In many cities, the slums should be replaced by either private housing or by non-residential uses. It depends on what the land is best suited for.

If city planning does not already have wide acceptance, planning arguments have relatively little effect in a "crisis" fight about public housing. It is much better to point out the housing shortage and the folly of tearing down even low-grade housing if the whole community knows there aren't enough houses to go around today.

Another approach, which involves planning but doesn't sound like it, is to point out that the slums contain our "best" land. That is, land for which some private developer would



be glad to pay a good price. And, of course, public housing should not be built on our "best" land. Such land may be ideal for commercial or industrial use—or for parks, civic centers, or any of a number of purposes other than residential, particularly *low-rent* residential use. It can often be shown that such housing should be built on vacant land, which is more economical. Everyone is in favor of being economical with the taxpayer's money.

The ideas and attitudes discussed in this chapter are going to complicate intense local battles that have to be decided in a very short time, usually without any chance for really adequate public education. That explains why anti-public housing campaigns based on distortion and misrepresentation are sometimes successful.

Even as the immediate battle for public housing is won, there must be a continuous attempt to get wider public understanding and acceptance. Even in localities where leading home builders and realtors have accepted public housing—there *are* such places—there are still plenty of citizens whose hazy notions about public housing are antagonistic.

The best way to overcome this antagonism is to build low-rent public housing projects. Build them well and economically, manage them honestly and efficiently. Make sure the public knows how well the job has been done and what good the community has gained by it. Then the public will understand and will pitch in and help.

### *Prelude to Progress*

The bitter campaigns of today and tomorrow are a prelude. Not a prelude to even more bitter fights but a necessary prelude to better communities and a stronger America.

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Winning the fight to clear  
slums by building low-rent  
public housing

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# A FIVE-POINT OUTLINE FOR YOUR LOCAL ACTION PROGRAM

## 1 THE NEED TO CLEAR AWAY SLUMS IS OBVIOUS TO EVERYBODY

The need to clean up and clear out the oldest, most dilapidated sections of nearly every town and city is plain to anyone who has eyes and will to use them. The human misery, the overcrowding, the dreariness, and the injury to health and spirit is apparent, without using charts, figures, statistics, or fancy arguments. But, of course, it is valuable to measure the extent of the total need and the kinds and degrees of need within that total.

## 2 SLUMS HAVE BEEN HERE A LONG TIME — FAR TOO LONG

Some of the worst slum areas in our cities are a century old: most have been with us for a half a century at least. Some tenements were outlawed decades ago—but they are still here. Then shanties and make-shift shelters, erected in the desperation of recurring “emergencies,” are still here, years after they were scheduled for demolition, and will be here for many years more.

## 3 SLUMS ARE COSTING ALL OF US MONEY — AND ARE A GROWING DANGER TO HEALTH

Slums are not only destructive to people but cost increasing cash to their communities. The home owner, the small business man, the owner of large commercial and industrial properties—they are all now paying a large part of their taxes to subsidize the owners of slum properties, whose small taxes pay only a frac-