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CAN THEY 'PLAN' THE NEGRO OUT OF THE FABULOUS 'NEW INNER CITY'?

(REPRINT)

By Atty. Henry Cleage, Editor

Years ago, when the world was stable and white folks had only white folks to worry about, there was a rule of law that was considered immutable. It was "A man's house is his castle." Actually the rule was concerned with all a man's property. It could not be taken from him without due process of law. In terms of our interest, this meant that in condemnation proceedings the property could only be condemned by a governmental unit for a public purpose.

Property thus could be taken for a public building, a highway, a park, a school or such, as long as the purpose for which it was taken was a public one i.e., the property remained owned by the public and used by the public.

During the depression courts were faced with the problem of low-cost public housing. This was argued in many courts for many years. The problem was that while condemnation of land for low-cost housing was going to lead to public ownership of the land and building, it was not, in a sense, going to result in a public use of the land or building. This was true because only certain economic groups were allowed to live in these units.

Negroes, at this time, were the most neglected segment of the community as regards housing, and we found no threat in the relaxation of the restriction "for a public purpose."

Later, due mostly to the passage of time, the striking down of restrictive covenants and the pressure of Negro Population on the ghetto, Negroes broke into new districts outside the Boulevard. As the Negroes moved out to better housing, white folks moved further out to "Better Housing." Soon it became clear what the result would be. The white folks were moving clear out of the city and Negroes were filling all the holes. This would never do: A Negro controlled city would still be the hub of the vast super metropolis experts know is going to develop around Detroit.

So another step was taken***

This has been called the Urban Renewal or "Negro Removal" step.

Here the governmental agency (Detroit) condemns your home or church or hospital, gets a grant from the Federal Government, clears the land of your eyesore - and then sells it to some private individual or corporation. No public ownership or use is even contemplated.

The courts have suggested that the public purpose is achieved because the house or section condemned was "ugly" and the new buildings will be

"pretty"

You can see where this can take us. The powers, we must all admit, obviously consider white people "prettier" than colored people. So --- they are moving us out. The Gratiot Redevelopment and the Medical Center condemnation proceedings have had one obvious result. Negroes get out!

Dr. Robert Weaver, federal housing director, remarked in Detroit a couple weeks ago that the clearing of land in the central city was missing the point if the resultant buildings did not absorb the displaced people. The Detroit News suggested that Weaver was talking like a child and that the cleared areas obviously had to re-attract the substantial citizens who had previously fled.

Of course, the upshot of this is that a pattern of "Negro Removal" is being established. It will develop in an inscrutable way around and about the center of the city. One day Negroes will look up and find that the center city will be a most desirable section with every advantage in location and facility and no Negro will be there.

Of course in about 75 years it will be a slum again, and then we will be allowed back.

This is a repulsive revelation but it is true. Even the Negro churches in the area are being forced to move. Oh, there will be white churches there.

Plymouth Congregational Church was assured by the City Planning Commission that it would be able to relocate in the Medical Center. Now the Illustrated News understands that the promise is denied and the suggestion made that the Detroit Council of Churches will decide who stays and who goes (an illegal delegation of power if I ever heard one).

What about Ebenezer Church? Will they also have to go? Yes: they all will have to go, including all the smaller churches not even recognized by the Detroit Council of Churches. They will all have to go, and the best church location in the city will be lost unless we Negroes get up and holler.

This is a problem for all of us.

Consider the implication of the new "relaxed" doctrine. If you are richer and can build a better house than I can, you can get my property. If you are "prettier", your neighborhood will just naturally look better than mine with all my "ugly" neighbors, then you can get my property.

As I said before "Urban Renewal" means Negro Removal.

Think about it!

T ACTION TO TEST BAN RENEWAL

COMMUNITY LEADERS TO MEET THIS WEEK AT CENTRAL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Note on Medical Center

Sixty per cent of the land in the 250 acre Medical Center redevelopment area is to be developed for other than medical uses, Gerald Crane, planning architect for the Center, told Illustrated News. That 60 per cent will be developed by other private interests.

Crane, a special instructor at Wayne in Urban Planning, is president of Crane and Goric, Inc., and participated in urban renewal in London in the early Fifties. He talked to the Illustrated News as this reporter was gathering material for a later series of articles on the Center.

PATRICK TO SPEAK ON "BLIGHT"

Councilman William T. Patrick Jr., Rev. Charles Butler of the Metropolitan Baptist Church and Horace Sheffield of the T.U.L.C. will speak at the Calvary Presbyterian Church, Vicksburg at Grand River, Wednesday January 31st 1962 at 8 P.M. when the Grand River, Joy, Linwood, Boulevard Community Council opens it's 1962 Community Night's series.

Mr. Patrick will speak on the "Amendment concerning blight producing establishments in relation to an entire community."

Other subjects of vital importance to this community will be discussed.

All residents of this area are urged to attend.

Now -- residents, associations of all areas are cordially invited.

Come out and hear the plans set up by this Council for 1962. Learn what you must do to "Protect your homes and your community."

"Rally to this meeting, all block clubs, P.T.A.'s Merchants Associations, Civic leaders, and residents."

NAACP and other Negro area organizations are being asked to participate in legal action against proposed downtown Medical Center.

Richard B. Henry, president of the newly organized Group On Advance Leadership ("Goal") said Friday that the litigation will seek an end to hospital bias and a broad decision on the constitutionality of Urban Renewal.

"We are not opposed to saving the city from decay," Henry said, "What we want is to take Negro Removal out of Urban improvement."

Henry said invitations to the NAACP, Woverine Bar Assoc., Detroit Medical Society, Cotillion Club, TULC ACT and other groups are being sent. These groups are being asked to sit down with us to hammer out a total attack that all of us will support.

The meeting will be held at Fellowship Hall on Wednesday at 8:30 p.m., Jan. 31 Central Congregational Church, Linwood at Hogarth.

Milton Henry, civil rights lawyer and Pontiac City Commissioner and Attorney Henry Cleage, editor of The Illustrated News will outline the proposed legal attack.

Both are "GOAL" members. Target date for the suit is February, Henry said.

