

12 November 1968

It was a warm day in May, when first, we came to the steps of this Institution. We came to exercise our right to dissent - to express our concern and to make public our commitment to Justice and Law and Order; more specifically, an end to Police brutality. It can be said, with justification that we held a hope- a faith in our system - our system of Police Protection and Justice.

Today, in cold November- we must announce the naivete of that hope - that faith. After a 6 month and 11 day delay; we must make public our findings on the Poor People's Campaign Incident, (hereafter referred to as Cobo Hall #1) and the subsequent actions or lack of action taken by the Detroit Police Department and numerous agencies of the City and Federal Government.

When the Poor People's Campaign came to our city - they were greeted with open arms. After the charge of the White Brigade, immediate action was promised by the Mayor and the Police Department. Indeed, there was action. Numerous investigations were undertaken; the Mayor had one, the Citizens Complaint Bureau had theirs and the U.S. Attorney's office conducted its own. From all of this "action" came two suspensions, Lt. Sikura and Sgt. Wright. Neither suspension dealt with the central issue of Police Brutality and true to form after much delay - both men were exonerated. It is interesting to note that Dreyfus went to Devil's Island and Sikura and Wright got paid vacations.

It has come to our attention that documents do in fact exist that name offending officers and list some badge numbers. The lack of action, the seeming conspiracy to maintain the status quo in Police Community Relations raises many questions as to the seriousness of the Detroit Police Department's commitment to JUSTICE.

The statements of Mr. Philip Mason and Mr. Sam Dennis, Field Representatives of the Community Relations Service, United States Department of Justice are dated the 11th and 13th of June respectively. These statements are in the hands of the U.S. Attorney's office in Detroit, the Citizen's Complaint Bureau and the Commission on Community Relations. We find it deplorable that so called responsible leaders in our city have had information available to them since June 1968 and have for various political reasons chosen to ignore it.

There are real questions raised by the handling of this particular police riot:

- 1) What real power does the Citizens Complaint Bureau have?
- 2) Who does indeed run the Detroit Police Department ?
- 3) What role does the "Justice" Department play?



- 4) Who is the U.S. Attorney's Office supposed to protect and assist?
- 5) What does the Commission on Community Relations do?
- 6) Who does the Wayne County Prosecutor protect?

All of these questions come to mind after we conducted our own investigation and found the data attached to this statement.

We, of the AD - HOC ACTION GROUP - CITIZENS OF DETROIT have the following concerns and commitments which we hope to share with Commissioner Spreen:

- 1) We are committed to Local Community Control of the Police Department by the Citizenry through Charter Amendment or any other means available to this end. Further that, in this context of Community Control and as any arm or agency of Community Control which alone gives it meaning, there be established a Civilian Review Board.
- 2) That Inspector Bertoni, the officer in charge of Police for Cobo Hall I, be suspended and brought before a Civilian Review Board and a Police Trial Board and criminal prosecution.
- 3) That Lt. William Gerlach be suspended and brought before a Civilian Review Board and a Police Trial Board.
- 4) That Patrolman John Kurtstienner, Badge #2670, be suspended and brought before a Civilian Review Board and a Police Trial Board.
- 5) That positive identification be made on Badge #2999 and that he be held accountable for his actions on the night of May 13, 1968.
- 6) THAT COMMISSIONER SPREEN, MAYOR CAVANAGH, THE CITIZENS COMPLAINT BUREAU, THE U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE AND THE COMMISSION ON COMMUNITY RELATIONS GIVE AN ACCOUNTING TO THE CITIZENS OF DETROIT FOR THE SUPPRESSION OF INFORMATION THAT EFFECTS THE WELFARE OF ALL THE CITIZENS OF DETROIT.

We believe that the need for a Civilian Review Board has been evidenced beyond a doubt by the handling of Cobo Hall I.

Incidents that have occurred since Cobo Hall I bear out the underlying racism and the breakdown in Law and Order within the Detroit Police Department. We speak specifically of Cobo Hall II (the Charge of the Right Brigade at the Wallace Rally) and the Veterans Memorial Incident. We further realize that these are only the incidents which catch the public eye. The brutality that happens daily in the streets of our city- to Black people- to Poor people- to Young people goes without the notice of the Commissioner's office, the Mayor's office, the Mass Media. THIS POLICE BRUTALITY MUST STOP.

The Detroit Police Department must realize the serious effects of their attitude and their action. Daily, public confidence and trust in our Law Enforcement agencies is being eroded.

Citizens are learning that there is no place to go for real Redress of Grievance; as is evidenced by the outcome of Cobo Hall I. We deplore the control the DPOA holds on the Police Department. If the Veterans Memorial Incident speaks to the fundamental attitude of the DPOA and the DPOWA; then we are compelled to publicly oppose the DPOA and see as a commitment of prime importance, the control of the DPOA.

It is with a great sadness that we come here, today. We of the AD-HOC ACTION GROUP-CITIZENS OF DETROIT urge answers to our questions and the fulfillment of our concerns and commitments. We believe in Law and Order- BASED ON JUSTICE. This is not, presently the case in Detroit. If the Detroit Police Department does not see it to their advantage and that of the Community to deal with Police Brutality; then they must be ready to bear the consequences- violence as the means of redress of grievance.

We have made our commitment to Justice walking hand in hand with Law and Order through the streets of Detroit. On this cold November day, -WHAT, COMMISSIONER SPREAN AND MAYOR CAVANAGH DO YOU INTEND TO DO.