

# point of view

roldo bartimole vol. one no 1

## Cleveland Now: another gimmick

Just ask yourself: Is the answer to the massive physical and social problems of American cities to be found in 55¢ contributions of widows, 10¢ donations of welfare children, or one hour's wages of laborers?

Cleveland Now, (CN), creates the illusion that it is. Therefore, it's a pornographic answer to the city's ills. It is a diversion.

For a moment, let's not talk about program content -- which is flimsy -- but merely about its rationale -- which is deceptive. CN says spirit, positive thinking and boosterism -- based in some magic donation concept -- will solve city problems.

If this concept had any value, why not finance the \$30 billion a year war in Vietnam that way? Why not an America Now campaign to raise the \$102 billions the Pentagon wants next fiscal year? Or finance the space program or the billion dollar SST program similarly?

### BUY A DOLLARS" WORTH OF INVOLVEMENT

Involvement by donations is a fraud. It is the gimmick illusion of participation. For involvement means having the power to influence and make decisions, not giving 25¢ or \$1 million to "experts."

Mayor Stokes, in announcing CN, said that, "in addition to city experts, the program utilizes the best thinking of experts in the private sector" and that this "is unique in that it is a program of the community, by the community." I always assumed the community was made up of people, not 'experts.'

Are the 'experts' those who planned Cleveland urban renewal, public housing, and job programs by consulting computers and not people?

Ironically, CN's ploy comes at a time in history when real involvement has taken its most creative forms: blacks in the ghetto demanding control and power over their destiny, and students asserting the same. There's involvement with purpose.

Politically cute, CN has created -- with the help of an irresponsible press -- the pretense of problem solving, something Cleveland does best. Mayor Stokes put it well himself two years ago before the U.S. Civil Rights Commission:

"We have, in Cleveland, developed the art of accenting the positive to the exclusion of remedying the negative. How difficult it is, but necessary, to advocate as a remedy the accenting of the negative. How else to strike at and endeavor to dispel the deep, almost indigenous false sense of security and accomplishment that pervades this city?"

Mr. Stokes was right. Cleveland excels in creating the image of movement, without moving. It exalts the 'private way' -- a sickening paternalism perpetuated by CN. Ironically, it does this despite heavy, pleading reliance on the federal government -- \$143 of the \$177 millions for CN.

### POWER STRUCTURE PUT-ON. . . .

Who champions CN? Business, industry, and civic elites, of course. Some \$10 million is asked of 2,800 firms; about \$1,780 a year -- and half of that in something called "services." Some firms spend more than that on stamps.

What does industry get in return? Keeping on the good side of City Hall has some advantages. For example, the city will keep all its bonds reserve funds in Cleveland banks, instead of in treasury notes.

More significantly, industry acquires at almost no cost the image of a concerned, progressive force, responding magnanimously to the needs of the community. (James Reston was taken in recently and wrote that business leaders here not only back Stokes "but [are] providing him with whatever staff and services they can to reconstruct the city.")

And best, CN effectively conceals the need for profound changes in the society and radical tax revision. CN beautifully perpetuates the myth that problems are being solved -- with business in the fore.

For liberals there's something to believe in again. They haven't rid themselves of the Lausche era so much as they've updated it. Even as Mr. Stokes seems to build the public sector, he does it with deference to private elitism. It's based on personality cult, not a bond with those who need a champion. It's manipulative, not committed.

CN as a program lacks imagination, creativity and planning. It was put together hastily with the ideas of a few 'experts' in 48 hours. Its history is simple. Shortly after Dr. Martin Luther King's death, business leaders were told to come up with some money. Okay, they said, give us a program -- a reason to give you the money. Newsmedia executives responded similarly, "Come up with a program, and we'll sell it." Implicit, of course, was the coming summer.

Sadly, having evolved from the death of Dr. King, the poor will pay most dearly in the end. Expectations, unachievable by the program, will rise. Then those charitable people who gave money for 'involvement' will blame the poor when the problems -- as they will -- grow worse.

HASHED OVER AND OVER-HASHED. . .

Most of the program existed before CN was even thought of. But everything now carries the tag Cleveland Now. It's like buying a new suit for a corpse.

First, the media talks about 11,000 jobs. Actually, 5,500 are merely summer jobs -- and business will fall short of its 4,000 man commitment. Another 2,000 are allocated to AIM-Jobs, funded a year ago with \$5 million and producing at best menial jobs. Another 1,500 full time positions are promised under the National Alliance of Businessman by fall. The rest are primarily training programs which have a long history of failure.

The cost: \$18,750., or \$1,700. a placement, including summer jobs.

Some perspective on the problem: There are some 40,800 (Welfare Federation study figure) jobless people in the depressed areas of Cleveland; the unemployment rate is 15.5%; one of two with jobs is earning less than one can get by on; and out-of-school youth are more than 50% unemployed.

CN's housing call falls far short of desire. The 2,100 units of public housing and 400 leased units have been promised by Public Housing for at least two years. They have been in various 'stages' of development.

CN's call for 1,100 new and rehabilitated homes is amplified by the fact that a rundown of such efforts in Hough alone, (Cleveland Press, March 20), shows 1,108 in 'various development stages.'

Another 1,000 units of new home ownership have been in planning, but City Council is balking, especially on some units in Public Housing.

Perspective: There are some 60,000 substandard housing units in Cleveland, and more than 25,000 low income families, most living in bad housing.

Proposals for urban renewal have built-in dangers. Cleveland renewal kills poor people. Now, new money is being sought for University

Circle, Euclid Avenue, and downtown. Where will city resources and concern go -- to Hough, Glenville and the Near West Side, or to the university complex, institutions and businesses? The past shows that private interests have priority over the poor.

Just travel in Hough and then spend five minutes in the University Circle area. To build housing in Hough is impossible, but second homes for middle class students rise easily.

When the federal government released funds for University-Euclid, (of which Hough is a part), what became the first order? Funds to complete the purchase of land to allow development of 600 units of high cost housing for the universities.

Neil Carothers, president of the University Circle Development Foundation, said he was sure the housing would relieve shortages. At \$200 and \$250 for one and two units you can be sure whose shortages will be eased. Priorities continue to favor private institutions and business. Shortly after the fund release, the renewal department razed a billboard the university group thought unsightly. A stone's throw from Hough, the city worries about distasteful signs.

Civic patricians are closer to this administration than to Ralph Locher's. Mr. Stokes' new image maker, Bill Silverman, hails from the ranks of Republicanism. He ran Seth Taft's campaign, worked on the 'new' Dick Nixon's, and now says, according to the Plain Dealer, that part of his job is to bolster morals in the city. Such pretensions. Whose morals?

Mr. Silverman may make Cleveland a happy, brag-a-lot city on the surface, but image eventually wears through and becomes what it is. Detroit and Newark are good examples.

#### PROPAGANDA PARADE. . . .

The final element, and a crucial one, has been the role of the press in CN. It has pounded people with propaganda at every turn.

For the three television stations to make a propaganda film, show it at prime time and make no analytical effort, is irresponsible, not public service. The follow-up has been equally dishonest.

The newspapers treat CN as if the Almighty came down personally and gave Cleveland THE ANSWER. The hoopla would put P.T. Barnum to shame. The full page ads for the Mayor to pressure Council, despite its own deplorable condition, were blatantly extortionist.

Despite the serious problems, the media treats CN as if it were a fund drive for the Boy Scouts. The depths to which the entire extravaganza sinks was made plain in a gossip column in the Plain Dealer. The column used the death of Merle McCurdy to get another little plug in for Cleveland Now:

"Merle McCurdy's death deprives the Cleveland Now campaign of a contribution," it said.

And people worry about pornography and obscenity.

## what price honor?

The U.S. seeks an 'honorable' peace in Vietnam. The very thought debases the English language.

What's an honorable way out of the sticky predicament of having murdered a few hundred thousand people?

Or the honorable method of explaining 20,000 lives lost in Vietnam? Or the honorable interpretation for having dropped more bombs on a small nation in a couple of years than have ever been dropped in any war?

And, what's the honorable account for a few thousand cans of napalm on Vietnamese villagers? Who thinks up the honorable excuse for lying to the American public about who started what at the Bay of Tonkin? And who will provide the honorable, delicate reasoning for those bombs that open and send steel pellets that smash through a man's brain?

Maybe the only 'honorable' choice now is for LBJ to replace Harri-man with Perry Mason.

## petty people of district 22

What are you going to do about the sick people of your district, Rep. Bolton and aspiring (for District 22) Rep. Vanik? We hope that in your campaigning you will take some concern for the mental health of your constituents.

You would agree publicly, I'm sure, to the description of your electorate as well-educated, law-abiding, self-reliant, well-employed, God fearing, -- in essence -- substantial citizens?

Yet a poll by Rep. Bolton -- with careful reading -- shows them to be prejudiced, selfish, dependent, rather vicious, certainly stupid and somewhat criminal.

At a time when the poor are desperately in need of help, and the nation moves toward upheaval, your constituents voted -- 69% of them -- for a cutback in domestic (read: programs for the poor) spending, so that taxes would not be increased. Subsidizing poor people is to be avoided, they say.

Yet, these same self-reliant people elected -- 66% of them -- to have tax credits for their children to attend college.

And, these law-abiding individuals elected -- 58% of them -- to deny other Americans, presumably with darker skin, free access to housing. They opposed the open housing bill.

While denying the right to live where one can afford, these same individuals voted -- 78% of them -- for federal legislation to punish those who engage in rioting and looting.

And half of them opposed a \$1 billion appropriation to rebuild neighborhoods, but at the same time 75% want to strengthen local law enforcement.

What does all this mean?

It means the good people of District 22 -- Cleveland Heights, University Heights and surroundings -- would love to have the government pay their children's education costs, but vigorously oppose the federal government getting involved in feeding the hungry children of the poor.

It means they would like people in the ghetto smashed when they loot the stores that have been looting them legally for years. But, if by chance one of the blacks escapes the ghetto and can afford to live near them, they want to preserve the 'right' to deny him.

It means they would like to toughen the hand of the police. But they'd rather not spend any money to deal with the problems.

I don't know what you would call the person elected by this constituency, but I can offer, from the above observations, a political platform: Closed Housing, Closed Fist, and Closed Mind. It's a sure winner.

POINT OF VIEW - ROLDO BARTIMOLE

2150 REXWOOD ROAD  
CLEVELAND HEIGHTS, OHIO  
44118

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