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THE SEATTLE CIVIC UNITY COMMITTEE AND THE
CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT 1944-1964

by

HOWARD ALAN DROKER

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

1974

Approved by Robert E. Burk

Department History

Date 23 May 1974

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

Date: May 6, 1974

We have carefully read the dissertation entitled The Seattle Civic Unity Committee and the Civil Rights Movement, 1944-1964

_____ submitted by
Howard Alan Droker _____ in partial fulfillment of
the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
and recommend its acceptance. In support of this recommendation we present the following
joint statement of evaluation to be filed with the dissertation.

The "civic unity movement" which sprang up in many parts of the United States following the Detroit Race Riot of June 1943 was an attempt by influential community leaders to promote friendly race relations--or failing that, to eliminate racial friction. Although no evidence of coordination of efforts to establish these commissions has been found, a national leadership did develop.

The Seattle Civil Unity Committee began in 1944 by appointment of the mayor, with funding by the King County War Community Chest, at a time when the black community was growing rapidly. During its first decade, the CVC developed skill at quiet negotiation to smooth over minor disputes, although it was unable to accomplish anything of importance in the field of housing and job discrimination. It promoted a State Fair Employment Practices Act and worked closely with those who implemented it. With the rise of the militant civil rights movement after the Brown decision of 1954, the CVC came to play a much less active role although it survived as an organization until 1964.

Mr. Droker's study of the Seattle CVC is also a broader case study of the civil rights movement in Seattle. He bases it upon the CVC archives and upon the papers of other individuals and organizations active in the civil rights movement in Seattle. He has interviewed many of the surviving leaders and made a close study of the local press. We recommend acceptance of his dissertation.

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PREFACE

This dissertation tells the story of the Seattle Civic Unity Committee, a moderate civil rights group made up of prominent and generally conservative citizens of the city. It traces the CUC from its origins in the tense racial situation of World War II, through the first postwar decade when it enjoyed its greatest successes, and culminates with the demise of the Committee in the changing world of civil rights of the early 1960s. While the CUC is the focus of the study, it is placed in the context of the wider civil rights struggle and is compared to other local civil rights agencies.

The research for this study has been done primarily in the rich Manuscripts Collection of the University of Washington Library. My job was made easier and more rewarding thanks to the interest and help of Richard Berner, the University Archivist who first proposed this subject to me, and to his staff in the Manuscripts Collection.

Professor Robert E. Burke, my adviser throughout my graduate career, has helped me in so many ways. This dissertation and this historian have grown and refined thanks largely to his teaching ability and his wisdom. His guidance and friendship are much appreciated.

I owe my largest debts to the three people who have made my graduate career possible. My parents have always encouraged me to seek high achievement and have financially and morally supported my efforts. Barbara, my wife, has patiently encouraged and supported my work for

five years. Her sacrifices have been made with understanding and good humor beyond the call of duty. Her faith in me has made my tasks much easier and more meaningful.

CHAPTER ONE

THE BLACK MIGRATION TO SEATTLE DURING WORLD WAR II

The impact of the Second World War on the city of Seattle was enormous, changing forever its economy, its population, and the outlook of its citizens. Earl Pomeroy's contention that the West as a separate and unique entity in the nation was disappearing during the middle decades of the twentieth century is accurate for the Northwest's largest city.¹ A population study found that thirty-five states had a net civilian population loss from April 1940 to November 1943 and that the three largest gainers had been California, Washington, and Oregon, in that order. The war industry boom had made Seattle into a major industrial center, and simultaneously, had swollen the population with migrants from other parts of the country. The Puget Sound area was identified as the seventh most congested region in the nation by percentage increase in population from 1940 to 1944, having increased twenty percent in four years.²

¹ Earl Pomeroy, The Pacific Slope (New York, 1965), 372.

² Richard R. Lingeman, Don't You Know There's a War On? (New York, 1970), 68-69. See Lingeman and especially Richard Polenber, War and Society: The U. S. , 1941-1945 (Philadelphia, 1972) for excellent accounts of the great changes brought about during World War II.

By 1960, more than half the 557,000 residents of Seattle were migrants from other sections of the country.³ People brought their habits, customs, tastes, manners, and ideas with them to the Northwest where they influenced the lives of the natives as well as adapting to a new way of life. Among the more important demographic changes that the migration had caused was the shifting of the racial balance of the population which made Seattle more like other large urban centers in this respect. Blacks became the largest minority population.

SEATTLE'S MINORITY POPULATION, 1940-1960⁴

	Total	Black	Japanese	Chinese	Filipino	Indian
1940	368,302	3,789	6,975	1,781	1,392	222
1950	467,591	15,666	5,778	2,650	2,357	666
1960	557,087	26,901	9,351	4,076	3,755	1,729

The unique racial make-up of the West Coast population in general and Seattle's in particular were modified by the war and postwar migrations. Black Americans had been a small proportion of the population before the war and, more unusually, smaller than the Japanese minority

³Bureau of the Census, Census of the Population: 1960 (Washington) Volume I, Part 49, Table 98, 198.

⁴Calvin F. Schmid, Charles E. Nobbe, Arlene F. Mitchell, Nonwhite Races: State of Washington (Olympia, 1968), 49-56.

and only slightly larger than the Chinese and Filipino populations. The evacuation of the Japanese in 1942 and the influx of blacks from the East and South profoundly changed the character of race relations on the West Coast and in the city.

Seattle's small black community before the war was on the periphery of the economic and social life of the city. One son of a black Seattle pioneer characterized his own generation that came to maturity in the decade before the war as quiet, contented, and having limited ambitions.⁵ A black woman moving to Seattle in 1939 found the old black residents to be complacent and secure. There were perhaps two black dentists, two doctors, one lawyer, and two or three ministers, she recalled. These were, of course, important people in the black community, along with John T. Gayton, who was a bailiff and later head of the County law library, Lonnie Shields who worked at an exclusive golf club, Broadmoor, and a Mrs. Carter, a social worker who had some control over employment placement of blacks.⁶ A few businessmen and a few labor leaders from the Pullman Porters, the International Longshoremen and Warehousemen's Union, and the Marine Cooks and Stewards Union also had some status in the community.

⁵ Interview with Leonard Gayton, February 2, 1968 by Larry Gossett and Tom Gayton. University of Washington Library Manuscripts Collection, Afro-American History Project.

⁶ Interview with Mrs. Melvina Squires, May 9, 1973. University of Washington Library Manuscripts Collection.

The city's black labor force was small, with about four hundred union men and another four hundred in the labor force who were unaffiliated in 1941, out of a total black population of 3789 in 1940. At the same time, Seattle was a city of nearly 400,000 and had an organized labor force of 75,000.⁷ Orientals, making up a greater portion of the population, held many of the unskilled positions that blacks held in other sections of the country. A black newcomer to Seattle was surprised to find that there were no blacks working as Red Caps at the railroad station and no blacks working at the hotels as bellhops.⁸

The economic prospects for the few blacks in Seattle in 1941 were not promising. The city and country were beginning to come out of the depression as the United States became, in President Roosevelt's words, the "arsenal of democracy." The decision to supply Great Britain and France with war materials was a boost to the nation's economy; Seattle shared in the new prosperity when Boeing was awarded a major contract in 1939. But new opportunities were not open to blacks. The few black business and professional men catered almost exclusively to the black community which was growing only minimally due to lack of economic opportunity. Employers such as Boeing had never hired blacks in any capacity while others hired them for only menial work. Old habits

⁷ Robert Bedford Pitts, "Organized Labor and the Negro in Seattle," Unpublished Masters Thesis, University of Washington, 1941, 112.

⁸ Squires interview.

were difficult to break, especially those founded in such long-standing stereotypes as America's racial views. The powerful labor movement, controlling a large portion of jobs in the city, did not take a consistent and unified position on minority membership; a few unions were fully integrated, some were ambivalent, and many were hostile in varying degrees.

At its best, the labor movement was represented by the International Longshoremen and Warehousemen, the Cannery Workers and Farm Laborers, and to a lesser degree, the Marine Cooks and Stewards which gave their black members equal employment opportunities and full participation in union activities. But even these few unions offered little hope to those outside the unions because the union rolls were closed. The number of black longshoremen had declined from about forty, when equal rights were gained during the strike of 1934, to about thirty in 1941. The Cannery Workers and Farm Laborers Union was a minority union but was dominated by the Filipinos and, somewhat less, by the Japanese. Nor were jobs in the Merchant Marine expanding.⁹

Other unions, such as those in the building trades, Building Maintenance, and Musicians, accepted black members but did not or could not afford them equal employment opportunities. In some cases the unions themselves were responsible for the discriminatory hiring

⁹Pitts, "Organized Labor and the Negro in Seattle," appropriate chapters.

policies, protecting white jobs, and in others it was the employer's policy to hire only cut-rate black labor, not union-scale black labor. Therefore, the few skilled blacks in these areas did not join the unions, or in the case of the musicians, formed their own union. One striking fact brought out by Robert Pitts, a contemporary student of black labor in Seattle, is that it was believed by the unions and employers alike that the public would not tolerate minorities, and especially blacks, in positions of employment which brought the worker in contact with the public. As a consequence, black clerks were nonexistent outside of the Central Area and rare enough within it.¹⁰ It is impossible to gauge the relative importance of employer and union discrimination to the lack of opportunities for blacks; both were prevalent.

At their worst, unions such as Local 751 of the Aero-Mechanics categorically did not accept members who were not Caucasian. The Aero-Mechanics refused to admit nonwhites on the grounds that the secret oath of their parent union, the International Association of Machinists of the AFL, made initiates promise to never present a nonwhite for membership. The powerful Teamsters Union claimed to follow a nondiscriminatory policy but had only four black members, owners of their own small trucking or delivery businesses. And there is evidence that blacks already working for white employers were denied Teamster Union

¹⁰ Ibid.

membership and thus lost their jobs. Pitts found that the greater the contact between unions and blacks, the greater the mutual understanding.¹¹ But the Seattle labor movement was so large and the black labor force so small that most unions almost never came into contact with black workers. And as long as the employment opportunities were so circumscribed, the black community failed to grow.

By 1941, American industry was greatly expanding to meet the demands for war material and the Depression's pool of unemployed labor was drying up. Seattle moved dramatically from depression to prosperity in a matter of weeks. When, predictably, black workers did not share equally in the new prosperity, a nation-wide mass protest movement was formed which had, at least, the nominal support of most prominent black leaders and organizations. The March on Washington Movement under A. Philip Randolph threatened to bring one hundred thousand blacks to the nation's capitol in protest unless the federal government provided for equal employment opportunity on defense and other federal contracts, desegregation of the military, and met other important demands. Organized in early January, 1941, the MOWM, despite lukewarm support from the NAACP and the Urban League, won its important though limited victory when President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued his Executive Order

¹¹ Ibid., 112.

#8802 on June 25, 1941.¹² The Fair Employment Practices Committee set up by the Order played a limited though significant role in opening jobs to blacks throughout the war; it was hindered by its circumscribed powers, unwillingness of the Administration to invest political capital to insure its success, and by resistance to it from employers and unions.¹³ The more important reason for increased job opportunities for blacks was the shortage of workers during the war; blacks were hired out of necessity because there was no one else.¹⁴

Although Seattle's black community never became very involved in the national MOWM, as early as May 1940 the community produced a multiorganizational group to deal with discriminatory employment policies in local war production contracts.¹⁵ The Committee for the Defense of Negro Labor's Right to Work at Boeing Airplane Company, consisting of

¹² The Northwest Enterprise, which was close to the Seattle NAACP, gave scant publicity to the MOWM, except at the time of the Executive Order, though it was favorable to Randolh as an individual.

¹³ See Richard M. Dalfiume, Desegregation of the U. S. Armed Forces (Columbia, Mo., 1969) and Herbert Garfinkel, When Negroes March (Glencoe, 1959).

¹⁴ See Robert C. Weaver, Negro Labor (New York, 1946), 92, 97.

¹⁵ Dalfiume writes that there was a national network of such groups prior to the MOWM, Desegregation, 115-116. It could be possible that part of the reason that President Roosevelt did not call the MOWM's bluff on the March was the existence of these many local groups that demonstrated the black mood. An interesting topic for investigation.

black church groups, clubs, unions, fraternal organizations, and political groups, focused on the number one war contractor in Seattle and Local 751 of the Aero-Mechanics Union.¹⁶

Awarded major defense contracts in late 1939, Boeing began operating apprentice schools at its Seattle plant and at Edison Vocational Training School in order to meet its labor shortage. The company refused to admit blacks to the training programs, first stating that this was company policy and then shifting the blame to the Aero-Mechanics Union. The Union accepted the blame; as the sole bargaining agent with the company, it controlled hiring.¹⁷ On March 8, 1940, the headlines of the local black newspaper, the Northwest Enterprise, charged "Conspiracy Bars Negro Labor at Boeings."

The Committee called on black men eighteen to thirty years of age to apply for work or training at Boeing and to document the results. The June 7 headlines of the Northwest Enterprise angrily accused "JIM CROW LABOR UNIONS HITLERIZE USA." But after Benjamin Squires of the Urban League addressed the union membership on July 11, the union, by a unanimous vote, came out in favor of accepting blacks and of presenting a proposal to drop the discriminatory oath to the annual convention of the International Association of Machinists.¹⁸ The resolution presented

¹⁶ Northwest Enterprise, May 31, 1940.

¹⁷ Pitts, "Organized Labor and the Negro," 74.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 76.

to the convention of Machinists by the Seattle delegation was given little consideration and a final decision was put off pending the outcome of trials involving union discrimination in New York and Pennsylvania. Finally, the issue of admitting blacks to the union became a side issue in a jurisdictional dispute when Local 751 split in October 1940. The local officers, who had CIO leanings, were charged with Communistic activities and were ousted by the International. The new Executive Board of the Aero-Mechanics, appointed by International President Harvey Brown, met and rescinded the decision to admit black members, without consulting the membership, on the grounds that the July meeting had been controlled by Communists.¹⁹ The ousted faction attempted to organize a local affiliated with the United Auto Workers and the Congress of Industrial Organizations, both of which prohibited racial discrimination.²⁰

By November 1940, the black community realized that the re-organized union local had no intention of admitting blacks and that, therefore, none would be hired at Boeing.²¹ The Northwest Enterprise began to hammer at the subject of job discrimination in defense industry, taking every opportunity to point out the hypocrisy of opposing Hitler's

¹⁹ Ibid., 77-78.

²⁰ Seattle Post-Intelligencer, April 28, 1941. See also the William Earl Millikan Papers, University of Washington Library Manuscripts Collection, Box 12, Folders 8 and 9. Millikan was Mayor of Seattle.

²¹ Northwest Enterprise, November 8, 1940.

blatantly racist regime with Jim Crow industry.²² Once the U. S. entered the war, the fight for jobs became part of the "Double 'V' for Victory at Home and Abroad" campaign of the Pittsburgh Courier, which was picked up by the Northwest Enterprise. Although segregation in the Armed Forces and the anti-lynch law were important, jobs became the paper's overwhelming concern in both national and local articles. But the black community lacked the power to force a change in policies of major industries. Even the advent of the Fair Employment Practices Committee failed to bring about the desired change. Just after the Executive Order was issued in June 1941, the Northwest Enterprise reported: "The President's memorandum issued to quiet the rising tide of Negroes' protest against the hypocritical stand of industry and labor denying the Negroes' right to work in plants holding contracts for national defense falls on deaf ears in the far northwest."²³

Black leaders counselled black workers to seek training and work in defense industry and to report all violations of the Executive Order to the FEPC and to the NAACP.²⁴ There were few applicants and the Northwest Enterprise expressed its disgust that blacks were not applying to even the jobs that were open to them.²⁵ In September of 1941 there

²² Ibid., December 6, 1940, for example.

²³ Ibid., July 18, 1941.

²⁴ Ibid., August 8, 1941.

²⁵ Ibid., January 16, 1942.

were still no blacks employed at Boeing, though the work force had grown to 21,000. A complaint by the National NAACP to the FEPC about the situation at Boeing received the answer that President William Green of the AFL, representing the FEPC, would personally contact the Union in an effort to change the policy.²⁶

The first black employee hired by Boeing was a native Seattle woman stenographer in February 1942. Finally, in April 1942 the FEPC, backed by President Roosevelt, succeeded in getting the union to issue work permits to black workers through informal action.²⁷ Local 751 at first insisted that only local blacks be eligible for hiring. But blacks were only eligible for work permits, for which they paid \$3.50 per month, and not union membership and the job security it furnished.

The union gave little and that grudgingly. "We have officially gone on record as agreeing to live up to the letter and spirit of the executive order wholeheartedly and without reservation," said one official of the International. "At the same time we resent that the war situation had been used to alter an old-established custom, and do not feel it will be helpful to war production."²⁸ Despite the union's unwelcome, black workers became 2.9 percent of the total Boeing work force by the

²⁶ Ibid., September 26, 1941.

²⁷ Weaver, Negro Labor, 117.

²⁸ Northwest Enterprise, April 3, 1942.

summer of 1944²⁹ and that percentage might have been higher had the labor recruiters for the company been able to promise Southern blacks adequate housing in Seattle. Boeing actively recruited black labor from the South, in competition with other industry. However, despite the terrific pressure of the manpower shortage, fifteen black workers were dismissed for failing, in protest, to pay the \$3.50 per month for a work permit.³⁰ One month later, the fee was reduced to \$1.50.³¹

Outside of defense industry, other new jobs were opened to blacks when the Japanese population was evacuated. These were the kinds of jobs that blacks traditionally held in other parts of the country but were done by Japanese in the Northwest, such as Red Caps, cooks, waiters, and Western Union delivery men. Although the Northwest Enterprise warned against discriminatory action against the naturalized and native Japanese-Americans and later protested more strongly than any other Seattle paper against the evacuation,³² it was quick to urge blacks to take advantage of the new opportunities.³³ The Urban League acted as an employment agency. The Northwest Enterprise noted on May 22, 1942

²⁹ Weaver, Negro Labor, 117.

³⁰ Northwest Enterprise, September 8, 1943. The Times and P.I. did not report the incident. See the dailies at this time for the seriousness of the manpower shortage. The federal government considered moving Pacific Car and Foundry out of the area to provide more workers for Boeing.

³¹ Ibid., October 13, 1943.

³² Ibid., November 21, 1941 and April 3, 1942.

³³ Ibid., February 27, 1942.

that black business had increased twenty-five percent due to the Japanese evacuation.

Many jobs were still closed to blacks, some by the level of skills required by the work and some by discrimination. For example, an advertisement for Christmas help at Frederick and Nelson department store in the November 12, 1941 Post-Intelligencer requested "white applicants only." But by mid-1942, the concern of the black community was for more blacks to fill the new opportunities, not for more jobs.³⁴ Employment had ceased, for the duration of the war, to be a problem for blacks, except for the issue of job security. The Northwest Enterprise continued to attack work permits at Boeing,³⁵ but otherwise turned its attention to other matters.

The opening up of employment led directly to the rapid growth of Seattle's black population. It was estimated in early 1944 that the black community had at least doubled, from under 4000 in 1940 to over 8,000 and possibly tripled.³⁶ Predictably, this radical change in the population brought about new difficulties. Seattle experienced the same kinds of problems that occurred in every major Northern and Western city that

³⁴ Ibid., June 12, 1942.

³⁵ Ibid., July 3, 1942 and September 22, 1942, for instance.

³⁶ Jesse Epstein, "Report to the Civic Unity Committee, "April 1945. Linden Mander Papers, University of Washington Records Center, Box 45, Folder 1. (Hereafter cited as Mander Papers, 45-1).

experienced increased black population during World War I and World War II, though on a lesser scale than the much larger cities.³⁷ As black people became more visible and harder to ignore, racial tensions began to mount. Problems occurred mostly in the specific areas of housing and in public facilities such as parks, transportation, and restaurants. Jim Crow policies increased along with the black population.³⁸

Housing was a particularly acute problem for migrants of all races to Seattle for there was, simply, not enough to go around. Private housing was not built fast enough to keep up with the demand. Public housing might have been able to provide the needed housing once the defense industries were operating at maximum capacity, had the local public housing authorities been able to convince officials at Boeing and Todd Shipyards that their projections of housing needs were correct. "The realization of the need for housing came late by those who needed it most, namely the defense industries," according to Jesse Epstein, the Director of the Seattle Housing Authority from its inception in 1939 until the end of the war. "Public housing was still considered too much government, a lot of New Deal, so there was a great feeling of 'Let's go

³⁷ See Allan H. Spear, Black Chicago (Chicago, 1967) and Gilbert Osofsky, Harlem: The Making of a Negro Ghetto (New York, 1963), both outstanding histories of ghetto formation.

³⁸ Squires interview.

slow on it now, there's a war on and we may need some but let's not go overboard and let's certainly not build so many permanent ones because that means they'll be used for low rent afterwards.' " Sitting on the Mayor's housing committee with Epstein, defense industry representatives were able to block Seattle Housing Authority requests for more public housing than was eventually built. Within a year, however, industry representatives realized that a much greater number of units of public housing was necessary. They were having difficulty recruiting in the South because people in the South had heard that housing was not available in Seattle.³⁹

The housing problem for blacks was especially difficult because all new private housing was closed to them as well as any already existing outside of the Central Area, the black neighborhood of Seattle. Restrictive covenants still had the force of law and blacks were excluded from all-white neighborhoods by a variety of methods. These methods may have included violence; the Northwest Enterprise reported that the home of a black teacher was bombed in March 1941,⁴⁰ but there is no corroborating evidence of this. Even before the war, housing for blacks was unsatisfactory, with substandard housing in the Central Area being double the

³⁹ Interview with Jesse Epstein, March 13, 1973. University of Washington Library Manuscripts Collection.

⁴⁰ Northwest Enterprise, March 14, 1941. The incident was not reported in the Seattle dailies. I have some doubt about the incident ever happening.

city rate and overcrowding a major problem.⁴¹ In an April 1944 report, Jesse Epstein painted this picture of the problem:

Estimates of the present Negro population of Seattle range from eight thousand to fifteen thousand. Assuming even the lowest estimate, the overcrowding can be easily deducted. The 1940 population of 3,789 Negroes, plus the 771 now housed by the Seattle Housing Authority, makes a total of 4,560 more-or-less 'accounted for.' We know that additional private housing, whether used or new, is virtually unattainable for Negroes and that, therefore, there must be up to 3,440 additional Negroes living in the same areas, and for the most part in the same buildings, housing 3,789 Negroes in 1940. And if the estimate of eight thousand really is low, then the problem is increased and the potential tension more apparent as the estimate goes up.⁴²

The Northwest Enterprise of February 5, 1943 called on black residents to take war workers into their homes. The War Housing center had a Homes Lease program which paid all remodelling costs and leased houses for the war's duration.

As a result of the shortage of private housing, a high percentage of black migrants turned to the Seattle Housing Authority. Seattle was one of the few cities in the country to have integrated public housing, an accomplishment of Jesse Epstein. "So far as racial composition for considerations were concerned," Epstein recalled, "I made the decision administratively, early, that there would be no discrimination, no segregation, and to me, that particular approach or way of handling the matter was so obvious that I did not ask the [SHA] Board to declare a

⁴¹ Epstein, "Report," Mander Papers, 45-1.

⁴² Ibid.

policy in writing. . . . I was also a little concerned that if I raised the question there might be some consideration given to such matters as quotas, maybe even segregation." The federal government never tried to influence this decision or change it; while the Roosevelt Administration was unwilling to invest political capital in the cause of racial justice, it was willing to let local administrators employ integration.⁴³ Integration was simply not a popular goal in the 1940s.

Integration went smoothly at the SHA's first project, Yesler Terrace, and it was not until the Authority built projects in the all-white areas of West Seattle, Holly Park, Rainier Vista, and Sand Point that pressure was brought to bear on Epstein to segregate the projects. Pressure came from local businesses as well as residents while the housing was being built and when the first families moved in. These projects were built to house defense workers but were also designed as permanent housing. The SHA administered all defense housing for the federal government, permanent and temporary, and was never pressured to change its racial policy by the government. Tenant clashes occurred but none of which Epstein could classify as racial in nature. The building of temporary defense housing was coordinated with the defense industries, and Boeing and Todd had their own housing divisions to arrange for housing recruited workers. Boeing recruited many black families from the South and public housing was almost the only place for them to go.⁴⁴

⁴³ Epstein interview.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

When the Seattle Housing Authority began to build dormitories for single defense workers, the defense industries became apprehensive about the mixing of the races in living quarters. "Some of the defense industries were apprehensive that there would be great trouble and went to such an extent that some of them called Washington and said that this was certainly no time for 'social experimentation,' " Epstein recollected. When integrated dormitories were opened, Epstein was requested by Boeing and Todd to provide police protection. He refused to do so but police were present anyway when the dorms opened. He telephoned the city and had them called off. As in other projects, no racial incidents occurred. "I had most of the trouble before anyone moved in," Epstein recalled.⁴⁵

As a result of Boeing's conversations with Washington about the Seattle Housing Authority's racial policy, two race relations experts were sent out to investigate. That the two, Robert Weaver and Frank Horne, were black seems to indicate that the Roosevelt Administration quietly encouraged Epstein's "experiment." They found no trouble and made no recommendations. Epstein himself was elevated after the war, first to Northwest Director of the Public Housing Authority and then to West Coast Director. But once he got above the local level, he found it virtually impossible to change the segregationist policies of the local authorities from above. Nor did he get any encouragement from Washington.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

Towards the end of the war, when most of the incoming labor force to the West Coast was from the South, as the blacks were the last population to be tapped and Western industry was the last developed, blacks made up an ever increasing percentage of the people housed in temporary public housing. In Seattle this meant that projects were developing with an unbalanced racial mix that the Director never wanted, but there was no alternative and the SHA kept housing blacks in greater and greater proportions. At Duwamish Bend the percentage of blacks rose to forty before war production tapered off and the migration ceased.⁴⁷ On the West Coast as a whole, this meant that temporary war housing became permanent ghettos for those blacks who stayed on the Coast. San Francisco's Hunter's Point Project was and is an example of that fact. One postwar estimate put fifty percent of all blacks on the West Coast in segregated temporary public housing.⁴⁸ The pattern for the postwar period was set.

Other racial problems were magnified by the increase of the black population in Seattle. The sociological problems that grew out of the

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Robert B. Pitts, Race Relations Officer of the PHA, Address to the Annual Conference of West Coast Branches of the NAACP, Seattle, March 3, 1950. Civic Unity Committee Papers, University of Washington Library Manuscripts Collection, Part I, Box 15, Folder 17. (Hereafter cited as CUC I, 15-17.)

overcrowded conditions in the Central Area were similar to those of other cities that developed racial ghettos. Overcrowding led to health problems, crime, and deflation of the human spirit.⁴⁹ While Seattle had some Jim Crow institutions before the war, these became more prevalent as a result of the black migration and more visible as a result of the black community's commitment to doing away with them.⁵⁰

In July 1941, four black university students, testing the Park Department policy of reserving one day a week for nonwhites, were denied entrance to Coleman Pool. Bernard Squires, the Executive Secretary of the Seattle Urban League, protested to the Park Board and was told that the high incidence of venereal disease among blacks made the policy necessary. (Nonwhites were allowed to use the pool the day before it was cleaned.) Squires replied that the State Department of Health had no such statistics and that, if health were a requirement for swimming, all patrons should be checked.⁵¹ Within a week, Mayor Earl Millikan promised that segregation would end at Coleman Pool,⁵² but the practice did not actually cease until further protests were made in 1944.⁵³

⁴⁹ The Northwest Enterprise was filled with evidence of ghetto formation. See Kenneth B. Clark, Dark Ghetto (New York, 1965) for an excellent sociological discussion of the ghetto.

⁵⁰ Squires interview.

⁵¹ Northwest Enterprise, July 25, 1941.

⁵² Ibid., August 1, 1941.

⁵³ Civic Unity Committee Minutes, July 13, 1944. Mander Papers, 45-1.

Seattle hotels discriminated against blacks, as was shown by the treatment given to the famous black tenor Roland Hayes. Two leading hotels, reported the Northwest Enterprise on March 27, 1942, "declined to accommodate him unless he would promise to be seen as little as possible in the lobby and would entertain members of his race only in his room." Hayes stayed in a private residence. Perhaps the most unusual thing about the Hayes incident was Douglas Welch's article of protest in the Seattle Post-Intelligencer.⁵⁴

Other incidents of discrimination occurred at Longacres Race Track, where a black man was ejected from the club room with force and abusive language, a motion picture theater in the Central Area, roller rinks, and on the busses.⁵⁵ The NAACP and Urban League reacted strongly to such incidents with suits and protests and were successful in some cases in alleviating the practice of discrimination. There were reports of police brutality to blacks but these were isolated and the black community held Chief Kimsey in high regard.⁵⁶

Many acts of racial discrimination were committed against black soldiers in Seattle and throughout the state. This was especially true

⁵⁴ Seattle Post-Intelligencer, March 24, 1942.

⁵⁵ Northwest Enterprise, August 7, 1942; December 16, 1942; October 27, 1943; June 16, 1943; March 29, 1944.

⁵⁶ Ibid., April 12, 1944.

in the smaller cities, such as Walla Walla, Yakima, and Bremerton, which had a large influx of blacks in the military and in the shipyards, in Bremerton's case, where there had been none before. The Northwest Enterprise was full of articles on such public establishments as restaurants that posted "white only" signs in the smaller cities.⁵⁷ On October 10, 1945, it was charged that thirty-two of thirty-four Walla Walla restaurants refused to serve blacks, a situation which assuredly existed during the war. On June 21, 1944, the Northwest Enterprise estimated that eighty percent of Bremerton's restaurants, soda fountains, and beer parlors refused to serve blacks. The racial situation became so bad in mid-1943 in the Bremerton Navy Yard that the Yard Commander requested the Civil Service Office to route all blacks to Mare Island, Vallejo, and Hunter's Point in the San Francisco Bay Area. Blacks in Bremerton had great difficulty in securing housing, services, and recreation.

The black soldier stationed at Fort Lawton or visiting Seattle from Fort Lewis did not find the racial situation as bad as it was in the small cities. For one thing, he could find welcome in the established and growing black community. Initially, sections of the black community were very much opposed to the establishment of all-black USO clubs in the city, and the NAACP denounced the black members of the city's War Defense Council who had recommended them.⁵⁸ But a segregated Armed

⁵⁷ Ibid., February 27, 1942; April 3, 1942; April 10, 1942; April 17, 1942; April 7, 1943; June 23, 1943; January 5, 1944; June 21, 1944, for example.

⁵⁸ Ibid., June 26, 1942.

Forces could hardly justify integrated USOs, and by October of 1943 the black community was rather proud of opening its second all-black USO and of its service to black soldiers.⁵⁹ Growing racial tensions in the city, however, made the presence of black soldiers a matter of concern to black residents, for it was well-known among them that the sense of frustration and anger was growing among black servicemen as the war continued to be fought by a Jim Crow army.

The reactions of the older, prewar black families to the migrants provide an interesting measure of change in the racial climate of Seattle. The newcomers were resented, both because they were of a different sort of people, an unskilled rural working class, and because their behavior and numbers made black folk conspicuous and increased discrimination by whites.⁶⁰ In early 1943, as the black migration was in full swing, the Northwest Enterprise became concerned with increasing crime committed by blacks. The editor, Edward I. Robinson, praised the police and the daily papers for not making a racial thing out of recent incidents. "Let us do a little missionary work among our newcomers," Robinson continued. "Pipe down these loud mouth bus riders; our public misconduct, impoliteness, and maintain a wholesome respect for the rights of others."⁶¹

⁵⁹ Ibid., October 3, 1943.

⁶⁰ Leonard Gayton interview; Squires interview.

⁶¹ Northwest Enterprise, January 13, 1943.

Race relations were damaged, the paper paraphrased a black leader as saying, by "public discourtesy, boorishness, uncleanliness, obscene language, garish display, and drunkenness of a small minority of Negroes."⁶²

Nationally-known sociologist and Seattle native son Horace Cayton visited the city in August 1943 and told Seattle's black leaders to quit



Northwest Enterprise, March 27, 1944

⁶² Ibid., September 22, 1943

complaining about the behavior of the migrants. "Both Negroes and whites will have to realize that the migrants are a city-wide responsibility and are there to stay. The old Negro settlers will have to realize that they must 'carry the cross' for the behavior of the newcomers, whether they approve of them or not. If they do, and work toward a program to integrate them in the social fabric of the city, they will reap rewards in the form of new business opportunities and a greater political strength."⁶³ The black community tried to meet the challenge by setting up an Association for Tolerance and launching a "Good Conduct Drive" in September 1943.⁶⁴ In late 1944, the black churches formed a Fellowship Committee "for the purpose of orienting the new residents into our way of life."⁶⁵ The YWCA held classes to instruct migrants how to use indoor plumbing and electrical appliances.⁶⁶

It took time for the migrants to accustom themselves to their new way of life in Seattle and it took the old black families even longer to get used to their new black neighbors and the heightened visibility of blacks in the city. Horace Cayton had been right about the increased business and political opportunities that would come as a result of the black influx

⁶³ Ibid., September 15, 1943.

⁶⁴ Ibid., September 22, 1943.

⁶⁵ Ibid., November 15, 1944.

⁶⁶ Squires interview.

to Seattle. He had also been right about the newcomers being there to stay, though most people at the time thought or hoped that the migrants would go back where they came from when the war work was finished. The war years also made white Seattleites more conscious of the black community and its place in the city. Black Seattleites could no longer be ignored.

CHAPTER TWO

"DOUBLE V," RACIAL VIOLENCE, AND THE CIVIC UNITY MOVEMENT IN WORLD WAR II

The mood of black Seattleites during the Second World War was paradoxical. The uncharacteristic assertiveness of the campaign for equal opportunities in defense employment brought the community out of its complacency, and the moderate success of the movement brightened its expectations. But the results of that success—the large influx of Southern blacks and increased discrimination against all blacks in areas other than employment—heightened racial consciousness to new levels and, consequently, intensified racial friction. Before the war, the few blacks were neither a threat nor a problem to white Seattleites. Horace Cayton, a member of an old black Seattle family, recalled in his autobiography that there had been a reaction to the increasing black population during World War I,¹ but it was mild. During the early 1940s the white community was forced to take more notice of the blacks than ever before. This experience in Seattle paralleled a national trend in race relations and was a replay of similar racial developments of the First World War. Great population

¹Horace R. Cayton, Long Old Road (Seattle, 1963), 21-23. Cayton wrote that his father and his father's newspaper, the Seattle Republican, "had been the victims of the changing pattern of race relations in the city." p. 23.

shifts to industrial centers created, among other problems, intensified racial frictions which threatened to disrupt the all-important production of essential war goods.

Black Americans in general were of two minds concerning World War II. On the one hand they were cynical about official pronouncements on the war aims of the United States, questioning the sincerity of a government that would fight racist Nazi Germany with segregated armed forces and would advocate the Four Freedoms for the world's peoples while complacently tolerating the denial of the same freedoms to one-tenth of its own population. When President Roosevelt proclaimed that "the United Nations are fighting to make a world. . . based on freedom, equality and justice; a world in which all persons regardless of race, color or creed may live in peace, honor and dignity,"² black people were understandably skeptical. This was the special perspective of blacks, an irony that did not occur to most white Americans because of their generally racist outlook. On the other hand, black people also reacted to the war in a positive way. War rhetoric illuminated the shortcomings of American society, for blacks at least.³ A profound effect of the war

² Complete Presidential Press Conferences of Franklin D. Roosevelt (New York, 1972), v. 23, 112.

³ Horace R. Cayton, "Negro Morale," Opportunity 19 (December, 1941), 371-375; Kenneth B. Clark, "Morale of the Negro on the Home Front: World Wars I and II," Journal of Negro Education 12 (Summer, 1943), 417-428; Cornelius L. Golightly, "Negro Higher Education and Democratic Negro Morale," Journal of Negro Education 11 (July, 1942), 322-328.

on black Americans was heightened race consciousness and a resulting unity of purpose within the black community.⁴ This unity coupled with anger over segregation in the military and denial of jobs in war industry to create a new mood in black America, one of determination to change the racial status quo in the United States.

Andrew Hacker, a recent commentator on postwar America, has identified a general breakdown in deference to authority or to superiors in this country and attributes this breakdown to the experience of the Second World War. The population as a whole and blacks in particular were not only determined to change the status quo and claim their share of the American pie, they were confident as never before that conditions would change in their favor. Once the war began, economically marginal people of the depression period, especially women and minorities, were needed as never before in the manpower crisis. They experienced a revolution in "rising expectations," in Hacker's phrase, a determination to share in the good life.⁵ Evidence of this determination is the unprecedented numbers of blacks who joined protest organizations during the war, a movement rivalled only by Garveyism in the post-World War I period which was more of an escapist than a protest movement. The all-black March on Washington Movement had a large

⁴Rayford W. Logan, editor, What the Negro Wants (Chapel Hill, 1944) shows the extent of unity between diverse leaders.

⁵Andrew Hacker, The End of the American Era (New York, 1971), Chapter 2, "Two Hundred Million Egos."

following that was poorly organized and, therefore, it is impossible to estimate its membership. The NAACP grew from 355 branches with 50,556 members in 1940 to 1,073 branches with 450,000 members in 1946.⁶ The Seattle branch membership exploded from 85 in 1941 to 1,550 in 1945.⁷

From this paradoxical outlook by black Americans came the idea expressed by the motto "Double V' for Victory at Home and Abroad." This was the war motto of the Pittsburgh Courier; other black papers had similar mottoes signifying the dual nature of black war aims. Most blacks were anxious to fight for their country but, unlike the World War I "Close Ranks" policy,⁸ they were not willing to set aside their grievances at home. Demands were tied to the war's democratic rhetoric and protests against racial discrimination, official and unofficial, grew to unprecedented proportions.⁹

White Americans had difficulty seeing things as the blacks saw them and many considered the black press' campaign for domestic justice to be opportunistic and bordering on treason. Most whites either

⁶Richard M. Dalfiume, Desegregation of the U. S. Armed Forces (Columbia, Mo., 1969), 123.

⁷Northwest Enterprise, August 1, 1941; May 23, 1945.

⁸W. E. B. DuBois, "Close Ranks," Crisis 16 (July, 1918), 111.

⁹See Harvard Sitkoff, "Racial Militancy and Race-Rioting During World War II," Journal of American History 58 (December, 1971), 661-681 for a good cumulative discussion of protests.

did not recognize that blacks were second class citizens or believed that it was right that they were. Moreover, from President Roosevelt on down, whites believed that the winning of the war took precedent over all social problems and that the agitation of such questions as the racial issue interfered with the conduct of the war. Secretary of War Stimson's contention that the black press was stirring up discontent among black soldiers and the masses was typical of the mistaken belief that the black press wholly created black dissatisfaction.¹⁰ The black press did contribute to racial consciousness and helped put blacks in a fighting mood, but it also mirrored black dissatisfaction. One recent writer argues convincingly that a conservative black press merely changed its rhetoric in order to control the rising militancy of the black masses and to channel the masses into support of the war effort.¹¹

Not surprisingly, the conflict of viewpoint between whites and blacks led to racial tensions and violence. Just as important to increased tension was competition for housing and recreation space in the overcrowded centers of war industry. Much of the violence took place in the South against black soldiers in uniform and is largely attributable to the white Southerners' fear that blacks were becoming too aggressive. But racial violence was by no means confined to the South. The black press

¹⁰Dalfiume, Desegregation, 131.

¹¹Lee Finkle, "The Conservative Aims of Militant Rhetoric: Black Protest During World War II," Journal of American History 60 (December 1973), 692-713.

gave extensive coverage to individual acts of violence and to race riots (the white press did not) and helped to create a determined attitude among blacks to stand up to attacks and to fight back. Despite the increasing occurrence of racial violence, little was done to prevent more outbreaks until three major riots shook local government out of its lethargy. The Harlem riot, the Los Angeles "Zoot Suit" riot involving the Spanish-speaking minority, and especially the Detroit race riot of 1943 reached the stage of destructiveness to human life, property, and the war effort where the problem of racial tensions could no longer be ignored in many cities across the nation.¹²

In the eighteen months following the Detroit riot, over one hundred state and local committees were set up across the nation to deal with conflict between the races. This "civic unity movement" was, as far as the evidence tells us, a spontaneous phenomenon, a chain reaction, without a central initiating or guiding force.¹³ There were some attempts at

¹² See Sitkoff, "Racial Militancy;" Robert Shogun and Tom Craig, The Detroit Race Riot (Philadelphia, 1964); Richard Polenber, War and Society: The U. S., 1941-1945 (Philadelphia, 1972), 127-129; and Richard R. Lingeman, Don't You Know There's a War On? (New York, 1970), 323-329. Lingeman writes that the estimated loss of manhours in the first two days of rioting in Detroit was 2,000,000, page 323. See Carey McWilliams, North From Mexico (Philadelphia, 1949), 238-258, 264-265 on the "Zoot Suit" riot.

¹³ Lester B. Granger, "A Hopeful Sign in Race Relations," Survey Graphic 33 (November, 1944), 455-456, 476-477, 479, contends that the movement was spontaneous and the writer has found nothing to contradict him.

federation, including the Southern Regional Council, the American Council on Race Relations, and under such existing groups as the NAACP, the Urban League, and the President's FEPC, but the autonomous local committees had diverse methods, purposes, and authority.¹⁴ Some were established to lessen racial tensions and others to work toward increased racial justice, though the line that divided these goals was often indistinguishable. Urban League Executive Secretary Lester B. Granger's 1945 survey of fifty-seven such committees found interracial membership was universal and that "prestigious" or influential people, representative of the "Establishment," were recruited to serve. Professional people were heavily over-represented. "Generally speaking," Granger wrote, "committee membership is eminently respectable, but not remarkable for qualities of dynamic leadership."¹⁵ Few of the state committees had any legislative sanction, few of the municipal committees had the endorsement of their city councils, and most committees had inadequate budgets, relying on voluntary work. Granger singled out only two committees, in Massachusetts and West Virginia, as being really effective. The committees received some aid from the Office of Community War Services, the War Manpower Commission, and the National Housing Agency, all federal agencies.¹⁶

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., 455.

¹⁶ Ibid.

In Seattle, racial friction became noticeable during the campaign for fair employment in defense industry, but tensions had mounted with the growing number of black migrants who came to the Northwest in 1943 and 1944 after employment had opened up. The police department was prepared for disorder. Chief Kimsey announced in September 1943 that "we're preparing for anything that might result from a crowded, mixed, and excited wartime population."¹⁷ It was the black community, which was most sensitive to the changes occurring in the city's race relations, that first became apprehensive about the possibility of racial violence and approached powerful people about taking preventative action.¹⁸ Blacks were more aware of racial violence occurring around the nation than were whites because the black press gave much wider coverage to such information than did the Seattle dailies.

In many racial incidents, the greatest fear of the blacks working to reduce tensions was that black soldiers would create a riot situation. It was well known to the blacks only that black soldiers were very frustrated by segregation and unfair treatment in the Armed Forces and by the humiliating behavior of white American citizens toward them.¹⁹

¹⁷ Seattle Post-Intelligencer, September 9, 1943. Emphasis added.

¹⁸ Interview with Mrs. Melvina Squires, May 9, 1973. University of Washington Library Manuscripts Collection.

¹⁹ Dalfiume, Desegregation, Chapter IV, "Frustration and Violence, 1940-1943," and Chapter V, "Problems and Progress, 1943-1945" describes the frustrations of the black soldier.

Black soldiers had been involved in many violent racial conflicts across the nation. The Army's use of blacks exclusively to shovel snow in Seattle was an example of the kind of treatment that caused frustration.²⁰ When black soldiers in Seattle finally erupted in August 1944, it was in an attack by members of a port brigade against Italian prisoners of war living and working at Fort Lawton. The blacks were apparently enraged by their belief that the Italian prisoners were receiving better treatment than they at the hands of the Army and the local citizenry, such as being served in taverns which refused service to blacks.²¹ The Northwest Enterprise denounced the attack as unjustified.²² In a mass courts marshal, twenty-three were convicted and thirteen acquitted.²³

One black citizen recalled that the black leadership worked very hard to avoid violence. "The organizations [NAACP, Urban League, churches, etc.] really got together and said to industry and the power structure, 'If you don't change some of these things [job and housing discrimination, Jim Crow, racial insults], the lid is going to blow off.'"²⁴

²⁰ Northwest Enterprise, February 17, 1943; Dalfiume, Desegregation, 93.

²¹ Seattle Post Intelligencer, August 16, 1944; Seattle Times, August 18, 1944; Northwest Enterprise, August 23, 1944.

²² Northwest Enterprise, August 23, 1944.

²³ *Ibid.*, December 20, 1944.

²⁴ Squires interview.

Mayor William F. Devin also recalled complaints by blacks about discrimination in public accommodations and about police brutality.²⁵

Mayor Devin created his Mayor's Civic Unity Committee in February 1944 in response to the black community's concern, his own new awareness of the problem learned from the Detroit race riot, and the suggestion from Ann Madsen of the Civilian War Commission (and first Secretary of the Civic Unity Committee). Devin told the first gathering of the Committee that they were brought together "to give study to growing tensions and to attempt to make recommendations to avoid any outbreaks of violence that might occur because of such tensions."²⁶ A study committee suggested the name, outlined the purpose, and proposed a means of financing the new Committee. While many people denied that racial tensions existed and, therefore, denied the need for such a committee, Devin disagreed. "The problem of racial tensions is one which is fraught with a great deal of dynamite because it deals with long established fears that have brought about prejudice," the Mayor said in a press release. "It is going to affect us as a city not only during the war, but also after the war. Now, it is our duty as citizens to face the problem together; if we do not, we shall not exist as a civilized city or

²⁵ Interview with William F. Devin and Arthur G. Barnett, November 14, 1972, by Howard Droker and Richard Berner. University of Washington Library Manuscripts Collection.

²⁶ George Greenwood, "The Mayor's CUC," July 1944. CUC I, 21-1.

nation very long."²⁷ The appointment of the Civic Unity Committee may also have had a political motivation; it was announced a few days before the mayoral election of 1944, which Devin won, and was publicized only in the black press.²⁸ That the Times and Post-Intelligencer were silent is not surprising when the CUC's low-keyed, quiet approach is considered. The Committee preferred not to be known.

Mayor Devin's original selection of members for the new CUC followed the nation-wide "fondness for prestige," in Lester Granger's phrase,²⁹ in interracial committees. The purpose of the CUC, Devin recalled, was "to create in our city a committee of respectable, reliable individuals to whom the whole community looked and admired and respected because of their positions and their reputations and then to have them explain to the people why they should not discriminate."³⁰ The original Committee included "two members of the Negro race, one a minister and one a dentist, one Jewish member, one Chinese, two labor representatives (CIO and AFL), two women who had been interested in community work for years, one educator, one industrialist, one protestant clergyman, one lawyer and one banker."³¹ "Left-wingers" were excluded and politically

²⁷ Undated CUC press release. CUC I, 1-2.

²⁸ Northwest Enterprise, February 23, 1944.

²⁹ Granger, "Hopeful Sign," 455.

³⁰ Devin and Barnett interview.

³¹ Greenwood, "The Mayor's CUC." CUC I, 21-1.

conservative people predominated. Most of the members were professional people representing the upper economic and social levels of their respective groups. Ideally, the Committee was to be "non-political" and "balanced as to conservative-progressive viewpoints." And, ironically, the Committee's "majority viewpoint" was intended to "coincide as nearly as possible with that of the community,"³² ironic because most of white Seattle was racist. The first Chairman of the CUC was George Greenwood, a bank president who took what was for his day a courageous position, especially for a prominent businessman, on the race issue. The wartime membership fluctuated and no set number of members was arrived at until after the war.

The Seattle CUC was part of an informal national network of race relations agencies which shared information and experiences and together shaped the incipient civil rights movement in the years before it achieved widespread national attention. From its very beginning, the CUC relied to a significant degree on correspondence with other local committees and national coordinating agencies of local committees for its organizational rules, ideas of appropriate targets and tactics, and for information on the successes and failures of various programs which it was interested in instituting. At the first meeting of the Committee, Mayor Devin offered materials that he had requested from the Conference

³²Untitled, unsigned memo, March 16, 1944. CUC I, 22-2.

of Mayors on various committees nationwide. The Chicago Committee was a popular model and the Seattle group combined many of its features with scattered ideas from other committees.³³ It was by pooling its own experiences with the other committees that the CUC was able to overcome some of the inherent limitations on its effectiveness.

The Seattle Civic Unity Committee had the same general characteristics as most of the committees found in Granger's survey. The members were chosen as much for their standing in the city as for their knowledge and experience in intergroup relations. Some of the appointees had experience in minority rights affairs, including the two black members, Reverend F. Benjamin Davis and Dr. Felix B. Cooper. Arthur G. Barnett was active in the unpopular cause of defending Japanese-American rights and was attorney for Gordon Hirabayashi whose case against the relocation of the Japanese went to the Supreme Court. CUC President George Greenwood was one of the few prominent civic leaders on the West Coast "with the guts to take a strong stand against the removal of the Japanese."³⁴

³³CUC Minutes, February 14, 1944. Mander Papers, 45-1.

³⁴Irene Miller to Howard Droker, June 2, 1973. University of Washington Library Manuscripts Collection. See William Petersen, Japanese Americans: Oppression and Success (New York, 1971), 73-80, for an interesting discussion of the failure of liberals and radicals to come to the defense of the Japanese Americans at the time of the evacuation's planning and implementation.

Like most municipal committees on race relations, Seattle's lacked endorsement by the City Council and, without adequate financing, relied heavily on voluntary work from its members. The CUC was under the jurisdiction of the Civilian War Commission and its only salaried employee, part-time secretary Ann Madsen, was paid by the King County Community War Chest. The Committee was directly responsible to the Mayor, and during the war years was known as the Mayor's Committee.³⁵ Without any authority or powers, the CUC relied wholly on persuasion to accomplish its aim of decreasing racial tensions.

Before the appointment of the Civic Unity Committee, most of the people actively engaged in civil rights work in Seattle were black. Although whites served on the boards of the local NAACP and Urban League, most of the work on specific cases of discrimination was carried out by black staff. In other words, when an individual was charged with discrimination, he was usually confronted by the very group against which he was discriminating. This had the effect of polarizing the issue into one of black versus white. The most successful tactics in breaking down discrimination were the threat of litigation under the state's civil rights statutes and the threat of adverse publicity. But these tactics only forced the white person to comply, they did not tie compliance to any sense of

³⁵"History of the Seattle CUC, February 1944 to January 1952." CUC, I, 1-1.

racial justice and antagonized the person threatened. More often than not, discrimination was continued because the black community did not have the resources to fight it. Most of the predominantly white groups which did concern themselves with minority rights were suspect to the white community because they were Communist or otherwise left of center and, therefore, did not get the cooperation or attention of the citizens. Their tactics were even more aggressive than the blacks' and alienated people from their cause. The tactics of civil rights advocates prior to the appointment of the CUC, whether successful or not, tended to increase racial tensions and were, therefore, rejected by the CUC.

The respectable members of the Civic Unity Committee, representing the city "Establishment" and diametrically opposed to the radical approach to civil rights, never threatened any of its contacts and bent over backwards to understand the position of the discriminator. They perceived their duties to include gathering information and making recommendations based on that data to the Mayor and other authorities and civic agencies and cooperating with them in matters of race relations. The Committee was also prepared to initiate "constructive programs and activities through community organizations and other appropriate channels," to educate the public on race relations, and to utilize factual information compiled by existing agencies and by individuals.³⁶ They used the

³⁶CUC Minutes, March 16, 1944. CUC I, 22-2.

concepts of democracy and the logic of self-interest in presenting their case. Progress rather than continued discrimination was highlighted.

The Committee reported that their approach was a pleasant surprise to businessmen who had been criticized by "left-wing" groups.³⁷

"When a couple of nice people from the Mayor's Office would go out and talk to somebody, what were these people going to do?," Arthur Barnett remembered. "It wasn't the sort of thing that would create violence, it was a healing approach."³⁸ The Committee correctly assumed that prejudice was common and not easily changed³⁹ and was always understanding of the problems of the discriminator. "It had to gain the confidence of the community by the fairness of its attitude, its willingness to understand the contrasting interests and philosophies,"⁴⁰ read an official CUC history. It may have been too understanding; the members seemed more solicitous of the feelings of the discriminators than of the feelings of those people humiliated by them. The Committee tried to use factual arguments to support their position, though it was not until after the war that the CUC had the staff and money to request and subsidize local studies to compile and disseminate facts to the public. During the war, publicity was avoided except in the case of the return of the

³⁷"History of the CUC." CUC I, 1-1.

³⁸Devin and Barnett interview.

³⁹"History of the CUC." CUC I, 1-1.

⁴⁰Ibid.

Japanese to Seattle. The CUC was commended by black leaders and the Northwest Enterprise for its part in bringing the War Department's film "The Negro Soldier" to Seattle theaters,⁴¹ but most Seattleites were unaware of the Committee's existence.

At an early CUC meeting in March 1944, the racial problems requiring immediate attention were identified as housing, transportation, employment, and recreation.⁴² The Committee expressed concern for postwar employment, anticipating a major industrial cutback, and felt that dismissals from jobs should be made by racial quota to avoid trouble. A member proposed that the matter be taken up with Chamber of Commerce,⁴³ but there is no record of any action following this. The CUC never came up with a plan to mitigate the effects on blacks of cutbacks in defense spending and, subsequently, they suffered much more drastically as a group than did whites.⁴⁴ The Civic Unity Committee did become active in the state FEPC campaign following the war and this will be discussed in Chapter Four.

The CUC's major case of discriminatory hiring practices during the war concerned the Seattle Transit Company's failure to hire black

⁴¹Northwest Enterprise, May 3, 1944.

⁴²CUC Minutes, March 23, 1944. Mander Papers, 45-1.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴"Job Opportunities for Racial Minorities in the Seattle Area," Institute of Labor Economics, University of Washington, 1948. The CUC suggested and partially funded this study. See Chapter Three for a discussion of the study's findings.

drivers even in the face of a severe manpower shortage. The question was first opened when General Manager Lloyd Graber of the Transit Company met with the CUC concerning an incident of racial conflict on the busses. When Graber admitted knowledge of black drivers in San Francisco but did not know how the arrangement was working out, the Committee made its own inquiries in San Francisco.⁴⁵ At an August CUC meeting, Graber suggested that the occurrence of racial clashes on the busses "was making it increasingly difficult to discuss the subject of hiring negro drivers."⁴⁶ By this time, the issue had been made more acute by the Philadelphia transit strike of August 1944 which, over the same issue of hiring black drivers, had disrupted war production and had antagonized blacks.⁴⁷ Radicals put pressure on the Committee to hold hearings on the matter.⁴⁸ The CUC pursued the matter in its own way, discussing it at meetings and urging the Urban League to encourage black applications for driving jobs, until February 1945 when ten blacks had applied for the job. A special CUC committee met with the company and the union.⁴⁹ Blacks were enrolled in the training program at Seattle Transit in mid-February

⁴⁵ CUC Minutes, March 30, 1944. CUC I, 22-2.

⁴⁶ CUC Minutes, August 3, 1944. CUC I, 22-5.

⁴⁷ See Allan M. Winkler, "The Philadelphia Transit Strike of 1944," Journal of American History 59 (June 1972), 73-89.

⁴⁸ Del Castle in the Washington Commonwealth Federation's newspaper New World, August 17, 1944.

⁴⁹ CUC Minutes, February 1, 1945. CUC I, 22-8.

1945,⁵⁰ but white drivers blocked their hiring by failing them in the obligatory final driving test conducted by the drivers themselves.⁵¹

The Northwest Enterprise and the Urban League were critical of the Transit Company, but CUC Chairman Greenwood expressed his confidence in the Company's good faith. The CUC met with representatives of the Urban League and the Northwest Enterprise in an effort to tone down their attacks on the Company.⁵² When the first black driver was finally hired in late April 1945,⁵³ the CUC sent letters of commendation to the Transit Company, the union, and to the new driver.

The issue of racial tensions on the public transit system became one of the early concerns of the CUC. It was felt by the Northwest Enterprise, the Transit Company, and the CUC that the busses were a potential site of racial violence because of the unavoidable racial mixing at close quarters. In March of 1944, a black woman was evicted from a bus by the driver and arrested by four policemen who manhandled and cursed her.⁵⁴ The Civic Unity Committee immediately invited Lloyd Graber to speak to the Committee about racial tensions on the busses. Graber blamed the increase of racial tensions on the attitude of recent

⁵⁰ CUC Minutes, February 15, 1945. CUC I, 22-8.

⁵¹ Northwest Enterprise, February 28, 1945.

⁵² CUC Minutes, March 8, 1945. CUC I, 22-9.

⁵³ Northwest Enterprise, April 25, 1945.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, March 29, 1944. This was not reported in the daily papers.

white migrants from the South and to overcrowding on the busses.⁵⁵ The Northwest Enterprise called the police action "Gestapo tactics" and speculated that the presence of black soldiers at the scene of the incident could have fomented a riot. The paper reported that one soldier at the scene said, "And that is what I am wearing this uniform for."⁵⁶ An August 1944 incident also had the makings of a riot. When a bus driver told some whites who wanted to ride his bus that there were several blacks aboard and advised them to take another bus, a black passenger accused the driver of trying to run a "Jim Crow" bus. The driver called the man a "black nigger" and was then threatened with a knife. Graber again reported to the CUC about the incident.⁵⁷ The only CUC action on the matter of racial friction on the busses was to get the newspapers to play the incidents down. The dailies and the Northwest Enterprise complied by not reporting the incidents.

The housing issue proved too large and complex for the CUC to do anything about during the war. The Committee received Jesse Epstein's report on overcrowding in the black neighborhoods (referred to in Chapter One) but was helpless to improve these conditions. The Seattle Housing Authority was already integrated. Restrictive covenants

⁵⁵ CUC Minutes, March 30, 1944. Mander Papers 45-1.

⁵⁶ Northwest Enterprise, March 29, 1944.

⁵⁷ CUC Minutes, August 3, 1944. CUC I, 22-5. Greenwood, "Mayor's CUC." CUC I, 22-2.

still had the force of law and made exclusion of blacks from white neighborhoods legal. It was not until the 1948 Shelley vs Kraemer decision that the Supreme Court outlawed racial restrictive covenants and opened the door to limited CUC activity in the housing field. (See Chapter Six)

In the area of recreation, the CUC concerned itself with two separate instances of discrimination, one by private business and one by the Park Department. It sent members out to talk with owners of roller rinks which excluded minority races. These talks were unsuccessful and the matter arose again after the war. The Park Board was approached about its policy of reserving one day a week at Coleman Pool for minorities. (See Chapter One) In this instance, the CUC was successful in getting the policy changed.⁵⁸

Seattle's greatest racial problem during World War II was the return of the Japanese to the city which began in January 1945. The blind racism and fear, which were largely responsible for the evacuation of the Japanese from the West Coast at the war's outset,⁵⁹ had abated to some degree due to the federal government's publicity campaign on the heroism of Japanese-American soldiers in Italy and to a measure of public

⁵⁸CUC Minutes, July 13, 1944. Mander Papers, 45-1.

⁵⁹The Japanese-American did not pose a real threat. "There was not one demonstrable incident of sabotage committed by a Japanese American, alien or native-born, during the entire war." Roger Daniels, Concentration Camps USA (New York, 1972), 33.

guilt about the whole affair. Some "patriotic" anti-Japanese groups were formed and together with certain economic groups, notably significant parts of organized labor and agricultural interests, opposed the return. But, surprisingly, the return of the Japanese went smoothly and quietly because of the policy and propaganda of the federal government and the work of civic groups such as the Mayor's CUC.

The Army contacted Mayor Devin once the decision to allow the Japanese to move back to the West Coast was made. The Mayor turned the matter over to the CUC.⁶⁰ The Committee adopted a resolution which agreed with the Army's reasons for revoking the evacuation order, cited the heroism and sacrifice of Japanese-American soldiers, and concluded with the hope "that Seattle will respond as a truly American city and grant the returning American-Japanese citizens all the rights to which they are legally entitled." Greenwood met with representatives from the three daily papers who assured him that "the situation would be played down" in the press.⁶¹ The Times editorial of December 20, 1944, entitled "Loyal Citizens Should Be Received on Their Merits," questioned the justice of the indiscriminate evacuation, praised the loyal Japanese for tolerating temporary injustice, and counselled Seattle to welcome their return. The Times and Post-Intelligencer, following the lead of the

⁶⁰ Devin and Barnett interview.

⁶¹ CUC Minutes, December 21, 1944. CUC I, 22-7.

federal government, stressed the heroics of the Japanese-American fighting men in Europe and the Pacific in several articles.⁶² The papers also countered statements by hate-groups such as the Japanese Exclusion League and the Remember Pearl Harbor League.

When a general visited the city on the assignment of clearing the way for the return of the Japanese, the CUC coordinated his meeting with representatives of potentially troublesome groups which included the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Legion, the Teamsters Union, and the Central Labor Council. No minutes were kept in order to encourage free expression. Arthur Barnett, a representative of the CUC at the meeting, recalled what took place.

We were assured by the general that we would have no problem with patriotic groups because they seldom ever took a position opposite to that taken by the Army. And this was true. The American Legion and VFW went along. . . . So we just had Charlie Doyle [representing the Central Labor Council], he was a wild one. He said, "You bring them back, we won't be responsible for how many are hanging from the lamp posts."⁶³

Dillon S. Meyer, National Director of the War Relocation Authority which administered the Japanese evacuation and the relocation camps, identified opposition to the Japanese return as being almost entirely from "professional race mongers" and special economic interests.⁶⁴ Parts of

⁶²Seattle Post-Intelligencer, December 21, 1944, for example.

⁶³Devin and Barnett interview.

⁶⁴Seattle Post-Intelligencer, April 24, 1945.

organized labor opposed the return because of the fear of competition.

The Washington Teamster, looking ahead to the contraction of employment at the war's end, blamed industry for trying to get cheap labor out of the Japanese return to drive wages down.⁶⁵ The Washington State Labor News, a publication of the AFL Seattle Central Labor Council, published Charles Doyle's vehement opposition to the return,⁶⁶ but there is no way of knowing how the rank and file responded to Doyle's exhortations. The Washington State CIO News ignored the return of the Japanese. Produce dealers were another group who opposed return by couching their arguments in patriotic jargon while protecting their economic interests. The CUC sent a letter to ten produce dealers along Produce Row in Seattle who had displayed "no Jap" signs, appealing to "your spirit of fair play, on your basic American neighborliness and your desire to see that the principles of Democracy for which our men are giving their lives may not be stamped out and forgotten here at home."⁶⁷ The signs remained and the CUC, unwilling to resort to pressure tactics, lacked the power to force their removal. Most of the other opposition to the Japanese around the Seattle area was located in the Kent Valley where farmers feared Japanese competition. It is significant that the only organized opposition

⁶⁵ Washington Teamster, September 8, 1944.

⁶⁶ Washington State Labor News, September 22, 1944.

⁶⁷ CUC Minutes, March 15, 1945. CUC I, 22-9.

to the Japanese always crystalized around economic interests.

The successful, non-violent return of the Japanese to Seattle was possible because of a combination of factors in which the CUC was an important element. The Committee represented the responsible policy of the city government which was able to gain the cooperation of the press and thus moderate public opinion. Another major factor was the federal government's commitment to the return and its propaganda on the Japanese-American soldier which was its principal means of ensuring cooperation. Finally, the demeanor of the Japanese themselves, their acceptance of evacuation, their suppression of bitterness, the outstanding record of Japanese-American soldiers, and their quiet determination to rebuild their lives, was probably the most important element in the preservation of civic peace.

The CUC's involvement in the return of the Japanese, which took up most of its attention during 1945, was its most successful operation during the war. The threat of violence had been most real in this instance and perhaps this urgency had made the Committee a little more bold in countering the arguments of its opposition than it usually was. The issue was also somewhat less complicated than the issues of minority employment and housing and was more susceptible to the kind of actions the CUC was best suited to carry out. One member of the Committee, Arthur Barnett, housed one of the first returning Japanese families, and the Committee helped place many more in homes and jobs.⁶⁸

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Devin and Barnett interview.

The most important thing about the appointment of the Seattle Civic Unity Committee and the Civic Unity Movement in general was that it represented, in the words of Carey McWilliams, "the first seriously undertaken attempt 'to do something about' the racial problem" on the part of the white power structure.⁶⁹ The "movement" was a new departure in social action by civic groups, bringing the prestige of responsible and influential people to the cause of racial justice. This new group's commitment to racial justice was genuine and constituted a forward step in the white community's involvement in social problems. The Committee's methods were dictated by the general community's outlook and by the experiences and knowledge of the members themselves and fitted into the context of the times. A more flamboyant style was unthinkable for such a group and was increasingly untenable in the postwar years until the mid-1950s. In its early years, the CUC's approach was viable and its contributions valuable. The Committee played a small part in making Seattleites more aware of their city's and their nation's racial dilemmas.

The time would seem to have been very ripe for advancement of the cause of racial justice. In 1945, racist ideology was discredited with the films and photographs of German concentration camps which showed the logical conclusion of racism.⁷⁰ The time seemed especially ripe to

⁶⁹Carey McWilliams, Brothers Under the Skin (Boston, 1964), 17.

⁷⁰Polenberg, War and Society, 243.

black leaders. "Hitler jammed our white people into their logically untenable position," proclaimed Roy Wilkins of the NAACP. "Forced to oppose him for the sake of the life of the nation, they were jockeyed into declaring against his racial theories—publically."⁷¹ But Wilkins had overestimated the influence of the government's war rhetoric and had underestimated the ability of Americans to rationalize their racism with their ideas of freedom and democracy.

⁷¹ Lingeman, Don't You Know There's a War On?, 329.

CHAPTER THREE

THE CIVIC UNITY COMMITTEE APPROACH, 1946-1964

The Civic Unity Movement had been an emergency response to mushrooming domestic racial violence in the midst of the United States' conduct of total war in Europe and the Pacific. The movement had enlisted the support of a class of citizens who had been either unaware of or uninterested in the racial problems of the nation before that emergency occurred. In some cities such as Seattle, this new interest of important segments of the white community was sustained beyond the crisis. But in many cities, even those with major racial problems, the end of the war and the end of the crisis situation meant that interest and involvement in racial problems was spent. Carey McWilliams reported that the "crisis patriotism" which brought conservative elements into the Los Angeles Civic Unity Council during the war gave way to the conservatives' preoccupation with anti-Communism after the war, killing the Council.¹ Many civic unity agencies lost the official support, financial and moral, of the states, counties, and municipalities that had created them. Seattle's Committee lost its official support, but through strong leadership by its President and Executive Secretary was able to sustain itself

¹Carey McWilliams, "Los Angeles: An Emerging Problem," Common Ground 9 (Spring 1949), 3-10.

and become one of the longest lived agencies in the nation. Many of Seattle's most respected citizens continued to seek solutions to the city's racial problems in a period when such activity was unfashionable and frustrating.

When the Civilian War Commission ceased activity in 1946 and city government did not offer continued support to the Civic Unity Committee, two anonymous members of the CUC donated \$4,500 each to enable the Committee to continue operations for another year. The Committee opened offices for the first time and employed as Executive Secretary Irene B. Miller, the former race relations advisor of the Federal Public Housing Authority's regional office. No longer the Mayor's Committee, the CUC carried on a demonstration project to determine if there was a need for a local agency to deal with racial discrimination. In May 1947, the CUC was accepted as a member agency of the King County Community Chest, the coordinator of local charitable monies, a relationship which lasted until the Committee's demise in 1964. The Committee reorganized in 1947 into a twenty-five man Board of Trustees with overlapping three-year terms. The Board invited Seattle citizens to become at-large members of the CUC for the annual dues of one dollar. The at-large membership played almost no role in CUC affairs throughout its history, though it reached a peak of over one thousand members in 1951. Dues-paying at-large members never provided the extra income that the Board

had hoped they would.²

The by-laws of the reorganized CUC were incorporated in July 1947 and spelled out the following guide-lines and goals:

1. To effect a spirit of unity, mutual respect and cooperation among all segments of the population of the City of Seattle.
2. To take such steps by way of education or mediation as from time to time may appear necessary or appropriate to combat discrimination based on differences of race, creed, color or national origin.
3. To investigate complaints regarding specific instances of discrimination against members of minority groups, and to endeavor to work out solutions which will tend to lessen the intergroup tensions resulting therefrom.
4. To bring about a general recognition by the people of Seattle of the fundamental rights of all citizens to equality of opportunity on the basis of the worth of the individual.
5. To do every act and thing which may be incidental or relative to, concerned with, or proper for the accomplishment of any of the purposes herein set forth.³

The Board members continued to be the respected "Establishment" type citizens that Mayor Devin had appointed in 1944. Men such as Arthur Barnett who had been most active in the Mayor's Committee formed the nucleus of the reorganized Board of Trustees. The Board membership was conceived of as non-partisan and interracial and in 1947 included businessmen, clergymen, educators, professionals, especially

²"History of the Civic Unity Committee, 1944-1952." CUC I, 1-1. One of the donors was Mrs. A. Scott Bullitt.

³Ibid.

lawyers, union leaders, and civic leaders.⁴ Over the Board's twenty year existence approximately seven blacks, three Japanese, two Chinese, four Filipinos, and eight Jews participated. Each minority always had at least one representative.

Over the years, the character of the Board's membership did not change. While an official statement of the CUC said that the basis for membership was "the individual's convictions about the dignity of man," it was also contingent on a person's standing in the community. The Committee was meant to be an impressive group of people whose loyalty was beyond question because by 1947 the Cold War had put a chill on domestic politics. The membership was to be "representative of all responsible factions in the community," and the only irresponsible element that was singled out was the "left-wing." "The Board has been unique," read the official 1952 "History of the Civic Unity Committee, 1944-1952,"

because (1) conservative, as well as liberal businessmen have been recruited, (2) civic leaders in whom the community has confidence have played a major role and (3) the committee has never had the problem of left-wing infiltration, which has been a threat to many comparable Committees in other parts of the country.⁵

The dominant political posture of the CUC throughout its existence was conservative or moderate and the partisan affiliation was predominantly

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

Republican. There were several liberal Democrats on the Board in its later years, but Republicans continued to outnumber them.

The occupational breakdown of CUC Board membership, based on a list of 117 known CUC members, can be approximated. There were about twenty attorneys, the largest specific occupational group, including three judges. Of the approximately ten university professors, four were sociologists. The others were scattered from such fields as Political Science, Anthropology, and Home Economics. University of Washington President Raymond B. Allen served on the Board, along with a few Regents of the University. Several civic officials and administrators were on the Board, including three Seattle Police Chiefs, George Eastman, H. James Lawrence, and Frank C. Ramon, one City Light official, one representative from the Seattle Public Library, five administrators from the Seattle Public Schools, and two from the Seattle Housing Authority. The media was represented by John Heitzman, editor of the University District Herald, sports writer Royal Brougham of the Post-Intelligencer, editor Victor Velasco of the Filipino Forum, Mrs. A. Scott Bullitt and her son Stimson Bullitt, owners of KING Television and Radio, and John L. King of KIRO Radio. There were four clergymen, the most active of which was the Reverend F. Benjamin Davis of Mount Zion Baptist Church, and no more than one or two doctors, dentists, or accountants. Roy Atkinson was the Regional Director of the Congress of Industrial Organizations, Malcolm McLaren and M. R. Sterns represented the

American Federation of Labor, and A. E. Martin was the Business Manager of the Electrical Workers Union, but labor was not represented on the CUC after 1950.⁶

There were approximately twenty-five businessmen from a variety of medium-sized firms and institutions, including banks, real estate firms, loan companies, a printing establishment, a bakery, clothing stores, a book store, and an ironworks. Some business representatives were strategically chosen. Charles W. Hunlock was president of the Seattle Hotel Association and George E. Clarke president of the Seattle Restaurant Association. These two were able to bring about uniform non-discriminatory policies in their respective industries which were major public accommodations areas. Allen A. Zoll, III represented the Management Training Division of the Boeing Company, Roy Leighton and Phyllis L. Heinz the Personnel Department of the department store Frederick and Nelson, and William W. Metz was the General Employment Manager of Pacific Northwest Bell.⁷

Twenty-one women served on the CUC's Board, most of whom had been active in various civic organizations and affairs. Several of the women were teachers and a few pursued other careers. The women who did not have paid employment played a large role in CUC activities simply

⁶CUC Membership List. University of Washington Library Manuscripts Collection office files.

⁷Ibid.

because they had the most time to devote. They ran the Speaker's Bureau, put out the newsletter Fair Play, and were indispensable to the educational and organizational work of the Committee. Several CUC women went on to prominent roles in public services. Mrs. Robert L. Jones was an original member of the Washington State Board Against Discrimination in Employment, Mrs. Henry B. Owen became a Seattle School Board member, and Mrs. Edward F. Stern was elected to the King County Council.⁸

All of the above information is based on a list of all known members over the whole twenty year span of the CUC. Arthur Barnett was the only person to be affiliated with the CUC for its entire history, as Board member and Advisory Council member after his maximum two term Board membership ended. (The Advisory Council was in reality not a separate entity from the Board.) Most people served one or two three-year terms; some served only a few months.⁹

As discussed in Chapter Two, the Seattle Civic Unity Committee was part of a civic unity movement that spontaneously followed the Detroit race riot of 1943. The state, county, and city agencies that were established at that time were made up mostly of people inexperienced in the field of race relations who needed information and guidance in this new endeavor. These state and local agencies communicated with each

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

other on strategy and tactics and provided each other with factual data about discrimination against minorities. By pooling their experiences and information, the new agencies were able to overcome some of the inherent limitations in their structures and in the backgrounds of their members. The most important national body which sought to coordinate this informal network of intergroup agencies was the American Council on Race Relations which was formed in 1944.

The American Council on Race Relations was headquartered in Chicago and had an important regional office for the West Coast in San Francisco. Closely connected and sharing staff with the Social Science Department of the University of Chicago, the Council was conceived by such people as Chicago sociologist Dr. Louis Wirth as a top-level planning and policy agency to give information and guidance to established organizations on various levels and of various kinds around the nation. One of its most important functions was to be a clearing house of information. It gathered experiences from intergroup relations agencies around the country into one place and then was able to supply valuable data, advice on tactics, and models for legislation or agencies to meet the needs of local groups. The American Council on Race Relations played an important role in making such campaigns as state Fair Employment Practices Committees and desegregation of the National Guard into national campaigns armed with factual data and tactical know-how. The vitality and accomplishments of this level of the civil rights movement were as

important as the Supreme Court cases and the desegregation of the Armed Forces in laying the foundations for the more dramatic civil rights activities of the late 1950s and early 1960s.

The American Council on Race Relations was short-lived, dissolving in 1951, but one of its offshoots carried on its most important work, that of coordinating the nation-wide network of intergroup agencies. The National Association of Intergroup Relations Officials (NAIRO) was established in November 1947 at the National Conference on Local Race Relations and Minority Group Problems. The new organization utilized the office of the American Council on Race Relations as a secretariat and the Council's Executive Assistant as its Secretary-Treasurer. Louis Hosch was the first Secretary-Treasurer and a leading figure in NAIRO. NAIRO was set up to facilitate communication between public and private intergroup relations agencies on the national, state, and local levels, and to increase the cooperation and coordination of those agencies. One of the Association's most important objectives was "to improve standards of work in the field of race relations and minority group problems, to advance professional and technical knowledge and practice, and to aid the policy-makers, administrators and professional personnel in their day-to-day operations."¹⁰ The Association's academic ties and its concern with the professionalization of race relations work signified a

¹⁰ American Council on Race Relations mailing. CUC I, 16-1.

new level of expertise among the predominantly white race relations agencies. Scholarly interest in minorities and their social, political, and economic positions in the United States grew from a trickle before the war into a major area of study during the Forties and has continued to increase to the present day.¹¹

At the Second National Conference on Intergroup Relations, in November 1948, well over one hundred public and private agencies from local, state, regional, and national levels were represented. Of these, three-fourths were in the specific field of race relations and the other one-fourth were functional agencies in such fields as education and housing. The most important report to come out of the conference dealt with the drafting of and organizing and planning strategy for civil rights legislation.¹² This report became a model for the CUC's successful effort to pass a fair employment practices bill in the Washington State legislature. (See Chapter Four) With the dissolution of the American Council on Race Relations in 1951, NAIRO took over the responsibility of

¹¹In 1953, Gordon W. Allport wrote that "Within the past decade or two there has been more solid and enlightening study in this area than in all previous centuries combined." The Nature of Prejudice (Garden City, 1958), x. Donald R. McCoy and Richard T. Ruetten, Quest and Response: Minority Rights and the Truman Administration (Lawrence, 1973), 58-60, write that more and more masters and doctoral theses are written on the subject every year, more and more books, fiction and non-fiction, more and more pamphlets.

¹²Report on the Second National Conference on Intergroup Relations, November 18-20, 1948. CUC I, 16-1.

disseminating information and arranging conferences. It served an estimated 13,000 race relations agencies in 1951, though most were not formally attached to NAIRO.¹³

Executive Secretary Irene B. Miller of the Seattle CUC served on NAIRO's first Executive Committee and later became a Vice President of the Association. She attended the annual national conferences and kept up a steady correspondence. Louise Blackham, who succeeded her in 1952, also maintained close ties with NAIRO and attended the national conferences. In 1955, the Seattle CUC sponsored a study of how the Seattle Public School system was dealing with its intergroup problems and this study was incorporated into the NAIRO Reports on Education pamphlet. This activity involved the Committee in the problem of de facto school segregation, an involvement which lasted until the CUC ceased activity and was second only in importance to housing discrimination, as will be seen below.

The Civic Unity Committee maintained its own contacts with similar state and local agencies around the country, never entirely relying on the American Council on Race Relations or NAIRO for the full scope of the information it needed. The CUC's efforts to desegregate the Washington State National Guard is an example of the operation of the network of intergroup agencies.

¹³ NAIRO Regional Meeting, Seattle, May 5, 1951. CUC I, 16-2.

The CUC began communication with the Washington State National Guard in October 1947. CUC President James Hodson wrote Brigadier General E. M. Llewellyn, Commander of the Guard, concerning the recent formation of an all-black band, the only black unit in the state Guard. The letter was ingratiating in the typical CUC manner, delicately approaching the subject of segregation in the military. Hodson pointed out Seattle's success in avoiding "the serious problems that have developed elsewhere" around the issue of race and that Seattle's newly integrated USO clubs were running smoothly. "Our Committee is greatly concerned over the threat of Communism," Hodson wrote to allay any fears of a confrontation with radicals that Llewellyn may have had, "and we believe that one of the most effective ways to check the spread of Communism is to work towards application of democratic principles." But Hodson made no suggestions about desegregation, only asking for more information about the all-black band unit.¹⁴ Commander Llewellyn was invited to the January 1948 meeting of the CUC, which he attended, and was sent a copy of President Truman's Commission on Civil Rights' report To Secure These Rights which recommended the integration of the National Guard. But whatever his sentiments, General Llewellyn's hands were tied by the War Department.

¹⁴Hodson to Llewellyn, October 21, 1947. CUC I, 20-11.

State National Guards, while under direct control of state governors, were under the ultimate authority of the War Department. The War Department required all units below the battalion level to be segregated until this policy was successfully challenged in the late 1940s. It was the states that forced the issue, though they were aided by the changing federal position on blacks in the military which culminated in President Truman's Executive Order #9981 setting up the Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Forces (the Fahy Committee) on July 26, 1948. The first state to desegregate its National Guard was New Jersey which adopted a constitutional provision requiring it in 1947. Secretary of the Army Kenneth Royall had no choice but to accept the New Jersey integration but he continued to deny governors from several states the right to desegregate by executive order. The issue was brought to a head in June 1948 when enlistment in the National Guard exempted young men from the new military draft and black applicants were denied this option.¹⁵ Royall, who was equally intransigent about desegregation of the Regular Army, was finally pressured into allowing the governors to desegregate by executive order in 1949 by Truman aide Clark Clifford.¹⁶

Desegregation of state National Guards was accomplished in two ways. In California, Connecticut, Illinois, Massachusetts, and Wisconsin

¹⁵ Clifford E. Rucker, *The Governor's Interracial Commission*, Minnesota, to Irene B. Miller, May 2, 1950. CUC I, 20-13.

¹⁶ McCoy and Ruetten, Quest and Response, 110-111.

the state legislatures passed statutes prohibiting segregation in the Guard. New York and Pennsylvania also passed laws but they were too vague and did not result in desegregation. The Governors of Michigan, Minnesota, and Oregon desegregated their respective National Guards by executive order.¹⁷ The CUC contacted intergroup agencies in each of these states, the American Council on Race Relations, the NAACP, the American Jewish Congress, and the National Guard Bureau in Washington, D. C. on the matter of desegregating the Guard.¹⁸ They gathered information on the problems encountered after laws had been passed or orders issued in order to present a balanced picture to the Governor and the Guard Commander. Some opposition was reported from some National Guard high commands and some from black officers of all-black units, but most states reported no real problems. Connecticut sent a detailed list of black enlistment in its National Guard by unit, rank and MOS.¹⁹ The Regular Army succumbed to pressure from the Fahy Committee, which was strongly supported by President Truman, officially adopting a policy of integration in January 1950. It took the Korean War to break down resistance to the policy within the Army.²⁰

¹⁷ Joseph B. Robison, American Jewish Committee, to Miller, May 1, 1950. CUC I, 20-12.

¹⁸ Correspondence. CUC I, 20-12.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Richard M. Dalfiume, Desegregation of the U. S. Armed Forces (Columbia, Mo., 1969), 199 and Chapter 10, "Korea."

Armed with favorable information, the CUC invited the new Commander of the Washington State National Guard, General Lilburn Stevens, to the May 1950 meeting of the CUC to talk "off the record" about desegregation.²¹ At that meeting, Stevens revealed that the Washington Guard had desegregated by a third method, quietly and internally without formal legislation or orders. Stevens informed the CUC that his headquarters was already integrated and that blacks were scattered all over the state in various units, in compliance with new army regulations won by the Fahy Committee. The CUC asked the Commander to make a public announcement of this policy but declined the General's suggestion that the CUC handle the publicity.²² Two days later on May 15, 1950, General Stevens ordered all National Guard unit commanders to conduct their units with "complete equality of treatment and opportunity regardless of race or color."²³ The Civic Unity Committee issued a press release to local and national black newspapers praising the order, but not to the local dailies which did not report the order.²⁴ Mrs. Miller continued to correspond with other states that had desegregated their Guards in order to anticipate any problems caused by the desegregation and to find ways

²¹ Frank Hellsell to Stevens, April 26, 1950. CUC I, 20-12.

²² Minutes, May 12, 1950. CUC I, 22-19.

²³ Stevens' message to National Guard Commanders, May 15, 1950. CUC I, 20-14.

²⁴ CUC press release, May 21, 1950. CUC I, 20-15.

to best cope with the problems.²⁵

In keeping with its educational objective of bringing racial concerns to the attention of the public, the CUC co-sponsored the Northwest Institute on Race Relations with the University of Washington annually from 1948 to 1953. The Institute was suggested to Irene Miller by Louis Hosch, then Executive Director of the West Coast Office of the American Council on Race Relations.²⁶ The Institute usually focused on one or two specific issues and featured outstanding nationally-known experts in race relations as lecturers. They consisted of lectures and discussion sections out of which grew recommendations to the sponsoring agencies. The Institutes were aimed at different audiences each year, finally evolving into a smaller-scale conference of local high school students.

The first Institute focused on Housing and Employment and featured Robert C. Weaver, educator and housing expert (and future first Secretary of Housing and Urban Development under President Lyndon B. Johnson). Besides speaking at the Institute held at the University of Washington, Weaver was rushed around the city to speak to several businessmen's groups, to race relations workers, and to give a radio broadcast. Future Institute speakers were similarly utilized and they always made a good impression. In 1949 the Institute dealt exclusively with employment and

²⁵ Correspondence. CUC I, 20-15.

²⁶ Hosch to Miller, December 5, 1947. CUC I, 27-22.

the recently passed fair employment law. Professor Dan Dodson of New York University and the first director of New York City's Mayor's Committee was the featured speaker. The 1950 Institute was geared to high school students and teachers and the Seattle Public Schools system was a co-sponsor. The noted anthropologist Dr. Ethel Alpenfels of New York University was the principal speaker. Dr. Harold Lett, the Assistant Director of the Division Against Discrimination of the New Jersey State Department of Education, keyed the 1951 Institute with his address "The World Challenges America." The 1952 Institute focused on Housing and the speaker was race relations specialist Dr. Frank S. Horne, Assistant to the National Administrator of the Housing and Home Finance Agency. "1953 Horizons in Human Relations" explored the entire field of human relations and civil rights as related to the Northwest. No major speaker appeared. In the last two Institutes, 1952 and 1953, an attempt was made to bring to the early planning of the program numerous community leaders with varied and divergent points of view and broadly represented interests in the community. But the CUC was disappointed by the failure of business and industrial leaders to appear at the Institutes as agreed upon.²⁷

²⁷Scrap note from 1952. CUC I, 28-12. Sixth Annual Northwest Institute on Race Relations Report is the basis for the general discussion. CUC I, 27-1.

The Report of the last Institute, 1953's, summed up the accomplishments of the Northwest Institute on Race Relations.

This Institute has brought to the public attention outstanding human relations problems of the Northwest. It has given an annual opportunity for those working professionally in the field, as well as the general public, to review the progress made in intergroup understanding and cooperation. It has provided a challenge for continued effort toward equalizing opportunity in various aspects of life and has pointed up the problems most in need of attention.

The recommendations of the 1953 Institute, following those of preceding Institutes, emphasized bringing racial problems to the public awareness and factual studies to counteract widely held beliefs that supported discriminatory behavior. There were few substantive proposals.²⁸

The reasons for the discontinuance of the Institute are evident. The annual high school conferences which took their place after 1953 lasted until 1964, just before the demise of the CUC, and were always reported in the Minutes to be successful. These conferences were co-sponsored by Seattle Public Schools and were hosted by a different high school each year. The host school helped in the planning of the conference and provided the student leaders used in the proceedings. The conferences usually got good media coverage. Representatives from private and parochial as well as public schools participated. The CUC also gave annual awards for the best high school journalism on the race issue.

²⁸ Sixth Annual Northwest Institute on Race Relations, 1953. CUC I, 27-1.

The Civic Unity Committee, always interested in using formal educational institutions to combat racial prejudice, became concerned about de facto school segregation in 1955 while preparing a report on the Seattle Public Schools for NAIRO. The actual report was written by Dr. Chester Babcock, the Director of Curriculum of the Seattle Public Schools, and, not surprisingly, was very favorable to the public schools.²⁹ The CUC concurred with this view, but set up a School Committee to keep abreast of developments in this area. In the next ten years, the CUC consulted often with the Public Schools and was often ahead of the Schools in its thinking on the matter.

Emlyn Jones, Director of Social Studies for the Seattle Public Schools and chairman of the CUC School Committee, reported in November 1955 that the Seattle Public Schools Administration did not believe it wise to change boundaries of neighborhood school districts in order to achieve a more balanced racial mix, nor did it assign teachers to particular schools on the basis of the teacher's or the pupils' race. He defended the idea of the neighborhood school and the CUC membership substantially agreed with this position.³⁰ At this time, therefore, the CUC like the School Board recognized the problem of an increasingly segregated school system while at the same time perceiving no role or policy that the

²⁹ NAIRO Reports on Education. CUC I, 16-2.

³⁰ Minutes, November 4, 1955. CUC I, 22-25.

schools themselves could formulate to stop the trend. Both the Schools and the CUC thought that little could be done to reverse the pattern of de facto segregation except through changing housing patterns. The Schools maintained this outlook until 1963, but the CUC realized that the policy needed revision much earlier.

The Schools administration and such outside groups as the CUC and ADL proposed various plans for mitigating the effect of housing patterns on the racial distribution of the school population. Some proposals were aimed at achieving a better racial balance but these were not seriously considered. Others were formulated to deal with the adverse effects of segregation and the concentration of "culturally disadvantaged" children in the Central Area schools.³¹ Dr. Calvin Schmid of the University of Washington supplied the following figures on Central Area schools to a 1959 CUC seminar on de facto school segregation.³²

<u>School</u>	<u>Percentage of School Population</u>				
	<u>Negro</u>	<u>Japanese</u>	<u>Chinese</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>White</u>
<u>Elementary Schools:</u>					
Harrison	75.6	2.8	1.3	1.9	18.5
Horace Mann	79.3	5.6	3.0	4.4	7.7
T. T. Minor	72.8	7.4	2.7	3.2	13.8
Leshi	66.8	8.7	2.8	2.1	19.7
Madrona	62.9	4.5	1.2	1.9	29.5
Colman	59.8	8.5	4.9	6.5	20.3
Bailey Gazert	37.3	24.0	13.3	7.1	18.3
<u>Junior High Schools:</u>					
George Washington	48.2	21.2	5.6	4.1	21.0
Meany	27.5	3.3	.7	.6	67.9
<u>High School:</u>					
Garfield	33.9	10.7	4.8	2.6	48.1

³¹ See Minutes, April 11, 1957, November 13, 1959, March 4, 1960. CUC I, 22-29, 23-4 and -5.

³² CUC I, 23-4.

Schmid pointed out that the 1954 Supreme Court decision on segregated schools would have no effect on Seattle's pattern of de facto segregation.

The Civic Unity Committee called on the Seattle Public Schools in November 1959 to take more responsibility in dealing with the problems arising from segregation.³³ The CUC School Committee recommended and the Board unanimously endorsed the idea of a voluntary exchange program of 11th and 12th grade Seattle high school students in May 1961. A letter was written to the School Board asking that such an idea be explored for feasibility and interest.³⁴ In February 1962, the CUC was able to write a letter of commendation to School Superintendent Ernest Campbell for the exchange program between Garfield and Ballard High Schools.³⁵ At an informal CUC meeting in May 1962, public school administrators announced that the Seattle Public Schools were changing their historic policy of providing the same education for all pupils regardless of the socio-economic and cultural background of the family and neighborhood. The new policy, urged by many groups including the CUC for a number of years, recognized that all schools are not the same and, like differing children, call for different education. The Social Studies curriculum for the entire system had been revamped in an effort to teach

³³ Minutes, November 13, 1959. CUC I, 23-4.

³⁴ Minutes, May 5, 1961. CUC I, 23-7.

³⁵ Minutes, February 2, 1962. CUC I, 23-9.

respect for and pride in individuals, and to develop minds open to change and acceptance of the "different." Meanwhile, the whole problem of desegregation was put off for another time.³⁶

The CUC continued to devote a great deal of attention to the issue of de facto school segregation during the Committee's last few years. It compiled information and factual data on the racial characteristics of the school population and the problems caused by racial imbalance. The CUC pressed the School Board and administration to go further in solving those problems than they were inclined to go. The CUC's leading worker on school problems was Mrs. Bernice Stern, who was chairwoman of the School Committee and a member of the Seattle Public School Advisory Committee on Equal Educational Opportunities. In September 1963 the School Board acted on the Advisory Committee's recommendations, agreeing to modify its neighborhood school attendance policy for the 1963-1964 school year and to permit voluntary transfers to certain schools under specified circumstances, but would not provide transportation. It further promised to implement an accelerated program of human relations education for its teachers and to further develop the "compensatory" education program in "disadvantaged" schools and its vocational training program.³⁷

³⁶ Minutes, May 4, 1962. CUC I, 23-9.

³⁷ Minutes, September 6, 1963. CUC I, 23-12.

Despite the concern and efforts of private groups such as the CUC and the growing awareness of the problem by the School Board and administration, de facto school segregation remained one of the most distressing and difficult racial problems of Seattle and all large U. S. cities. Seattle's public schools continued to become increasingly more segregated each year until a busing program was implemented a few years ago.

The Civic Unity Committee also had connections with higher education. It sponsored or suggested several studies of Seattle's racial patterns and problems that were done by professors at the University of Washington or by other professional groups. Four University of Washington sociologists served on the Committee: Ernest A. T. Barth, Frank Miyamoto, Robert O'Brien, and Walter B. Watson. Professor Barth was especially active as a researcher for the CUC, personally supervising studies on housing discrimination and the attitudes of residents of restricted areas. His research eventually led to the publication, with L. K. Northwood, of the book Urban Desegregation: Negro Pioneers and Their White Neighbors about six metropolitan Seattle residential areas, documenting the unexpected facility of housing desegregation.³⁸ The CUC sponsored studies of discrimination in cemeteries, health care, and nursing education. One of the most important CUC-suggested studies

³⁸(Seattle, 1965).

was the survey conducted by the University's Institute of Labor Economics in 1948, "Job Opportunities for Racial Minorities in the Seattle Area," which played an important role in the campaign for fair employment legislation. (See Chapter Four) The CUC also set up a grassroots study group in the center of the city to encourage people living there, the area most affected by expansion of the black ghetto, to think about and plan to meet their racial problems in a rational and democratic manner. (See Chapter Six)

Two other Civic Unity Committee attempts to educate the public about the work of the Committee and the racial problems of Seattle were the monthly newsletter Fair Play and the Speakers' Bureau. Fair Play was distributed to the dues-paying members at large and served to keep them informed about the activities of the CUC. It was characterized by an optimistic and cheerful approach to the city's racial issues, always putting forward a positive image of the work being done and the effect of that work on the problems it was aimed at solving. The Speakers' Bureau, which reached a much larger audience, presented the CUC's view of race relations in a friendly and conciliatory manner to a variety of civic, religious, and other groups. The Bureau was headed by Mrs. Stern in the mid-1950s and was at that time made up exclusively of women on the CUC. Mrs. Stern better organized the Bureau by preparing a speaker's kit to aid the individual speakers in interpreting the work of the CUC and better advertized the service by preparing a flyer on it and distributing it

to a wide variety of groups.³⁹ From that time on the Speakers' Bureau was increasingly popular with community groups.

The Civic Unity Committee also approached the many individual cases of discrimination in housing and public accommodations it was called upon to reconcile as educational experiences. A CUC representative would approach the offending party in a friendly and conciliatory manner, attempting to put him at his ease at the same time as trying to explain the case for racial justice in a reasonable way. This method failed to work more often than not, but the biggest drawback was that the "education" derived from it was limited to a very few people. The CUC avoided negative publicity against discriminators at all costs. In contrast, the civil rights protests of the early 1960s dramatized racial issues and brought them to the attention of millions of people who would not otherwise have recognized them. The important federal civil rights legislation of the early 1960s must in large part be attributed to the local protest movements that were able to gain national attention, as well as to the recognized failure of such agencies as the CUC to persuade the white majority to voluntarily extend equal opportunities to minority peoples.

The CUC had always recognized that one of its principal jobs was to make the public aware of racial problems. This goal was hindered by the equally important CUC aim of lessening racial tensions. The Civic

³⁹Minutes, March 4, 1955. CUC I, 22-24.

Unity Committee as a group never understood the position of many civil rights workers, mostly black, that racial justice could only be advanced by first increasing tensions and by dramatically holding up the shortcomings of society and the undemocratic behavior of discriminators to the public view. When the CUC did participate in large campaigns, such as the campaign for open housing, it always played the role of conciliator and compromiser. In some ways, of course, its reservations about strong campaigns against discrimination were more realistic than the more militant groups and individuals. Threats against people and institutions often made them more intransigent than ever. But the small success that even the CUC had with its more limited campaigns makes such "realism" questionable. None of the civil rights groups ever commanded much community following, not even the respectable CUC.

The conciliatory position of the Civic Unity Committee often got it in trouble with rival intergroup agencies. Nap Dotson of the Urban League appealed to the Community Chest in 1948-1949 to drop its support of the CUC on the grounds that it was duplicating the work of the Urban League, another Community Chest agency. Dotson had clashed with Mrs. Miller of the CUC over tactics for the campaign for a fair employment law in Washington state. Miller's ideas won out, resulting in the de-emphasis of black people's role in the fight. (See Chapter Four) In 1953, the CUC raised the ire of the Anti-Defamation League, the American Jewish Committee, and the Urban League for its handling of the Sand Point housing discrimination case. (See Chapter Six)

Criticism of the Civic Unity Committee from other intergroup agencies became intense enough in 1955 for the CUC to call a meeting to correct some misunderstandings about its role in the civil rights effort in Seattle. Represented at the meeting were the American Jewish Committee, the ADL, the NAACP, the Conference of Christians and Jews, Christian Friends for Racial Equality, the Urban League, the State Board Against Discrimination, and the University of Washington Sociology Department. Several agencies took the opportunity "to express resentment or misunderstandings regarding the position the Civic Unity Committee has taken in some problems that have arisen." But once the CUC representatives had explained their perceived role, a spirit of unanimity was reached and the CUC was urged to organize the local intergroup agencies to avoid such misunderstandings, to improve communications, to share resources, to consider appropriate common problems, and to coordinate intergroup work in Greater Seattle.⁴⁰ Out of this meeting, the CUC developed the King County Intergroup Relations Council, a miniature NAIRO.

The King County Intergroup Relations Council (KCIRC) was made up of representatives from the CUC, ADL, AJC, NAACP, the Seattle Urban League, Christian Friends for Racial Equality, the National Conference of Christians and Jews, and the Washington State Board Against

⁴⁰ Minutes, October 7, 1955. CUC I, 22-25.

Discrimination. The CUC claimed two successes for the KCIRC in 1957, but one of these, the Omnibus Civil Rights Bill passed by the state legislature in 1957, owed very little to the work of the Council as a group of organizations. The other was the Laurelhurst Beach Club case, involving the exclusion of Jewish families from the Beach Club of their neighborhood. The combined efforts of the CUC, the ADL, Christian Friends for Racial Equality, and the American Jewish Committee brought about the addition of a clause to the Club's bylaws prohibiting the exclusion of people for reasons of race or religion. The Club's officers never admitted to discrimination, and the CUC was happy to help them work out the matter for themselves. Not all of the KCIRC agencies participated in the action.⁴¹

The KCIRC did not succeed in clearing up the Civic Unity Committee's problems with other agencies. Another source of trouble for the CUC was its patron, the Community Chest. The Community Chest controlled the allocation of local charity money to various agencies including the CUC. From the beginning the CUC found that intergroup relations had a low priority for the Community Chest and year after year had its requests for more funds, staff, and equipment turned down. Financial problems were from beginning to end the major problem of the Committee, limiting its programs and its effectiveness. In 1957 the Community Chest

⁴¹Minutes, June 1, 1956. CUC I, 22-27.

requested that the Health and Welfare Council, an advisory group, review the work of the CUC to determine if its work was a duplication of other agencies in the area.

"All agencies in the field of intergroup relations," the report began,

in the very nature of their work, duplicate each other in many respects. This duplication however seems greatest in the area of purpose, with considerable [sic] less overlapping in method, philosophy and service rendered. . . .

Some agencies, in addition to a general interest in intergroup relations, have a special interest in the particular minority group it represents, i. e., Negro, Jewish, etc. . . .

In contrast the SCUC is concerned largely with intergroup relations from the point of view of the community as a whole rather than from the welfare of any particular minority group. . . .

There are two distinctly different approaches being made to the problem of discrimination: the direct and the indirect.

- 1) The direct action approach, deals with a specific problem, using any means available to alter the external situation, i. e., to allow an individual to purchase a house of his choice in the community of his choice, or to hold a particular job.
- 2) The indirect action approach, as generally followed by the SCUC, is more ameliorative, and seeks to alter the existing conditions that lead to discrimination by changing the internal situation, i. e., not only to allow an individual to purchase a house of his choice, but to be accepted as a member of the community itself. Thus by its very approach it works mainly thru the majority group involved and seeks to assist a group to solve its problems rather than to superimpose a solution from the outside.

Both approaches are useful, each supplementing the other. Therefore it is apparent that if the SCUC were discontinued, the Community, of necessity, would have to create an agency with similar approach and philosophy.

In attempting to determine the degree to which SCUC duplicates the services of other agencies, it became

increasingly apparent (a) that there was more duplication among the other agencies themselves than between SCUC and the others, and (b) that a better working relationship between the agencies is needed.⁴²

This report provides a good explanation of the differences between the CUC and other civil rights organizations, and upholds the CUC approach as a necessary and unique contribution to interracial understanding. The Civic Unity Committee was the only intergroup agency that consistently showed a genuine interest in beliefs and feelings of the white masses and made an effort to understand the bases for discrimination against minority races and religions. This was a valuable point of view from within the civil rights movement, one which too many well-intentioned people failed to perceive. While the civic unity approach certainly had major limitations, it also had great strengths. Unfortunately, these strengths were not used to advantage by the rest of the movement for racial justice in Seattle.

⁴²"Report and Recommendations of the Review Committee." CUC I, 22-30.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CAMPAIGN FOR A FAIR EMPLOYMENT LAW IN WASHINGTON STATE, 1945-1949

The creation of the federal Fair Employment Practices Commission by executive order was seen by most government officials as a wartime concession to black people to be dropped after the emergency of the war was over. Black leaders and their white allies, on the other hand, were determined to make the temporary agency into a permanent Commission to cement the gains made by black labor during the war and to fulfill the promise of fair employment. But President Roosevelt never gave the FEPC the kind of support it needed to give it much impact on national hiring practices and, as the war came to an end, the Congress first severely cut its allocations and, finally, in 1946 cut off funding altogether. The Truman Administration, understandably, also failed to support the FEPC in a meaningful way. When Truman seized the Capitol Transit Company during a strike in November 1945, he ordered that the FEPC's directive that the company cease and desist from discriminatory hiring practices not be released. Truman's Executive Order 9664 of December 20, 1945 took away the Committee's power to issue cease-and-desist orders, and, seeking Southern legislative support for his domestic program, he let the FEPC die on June 28, 1946.¹ The Truman Administration made verbal

¹William C. Berman, The Politics of Civil Rights in the Truman Administration (Columbus, 1970), 30-31

efforts to establish a permanent FEPC, especially after the President's Committee on Civil Rights' report To Secure These Rights so strongly recommended it, but never backed up its rhetoric with power.² In their definitive study of Truman and civil rights, historians Donald R. McCoy and Richard T. Reutten have concluded that "the White House had neither enough public or congressional support nor other weapons at hand to win [the FEPC legislation]."³

To fill the void, twenty-seven state legislatures and governors, prodded by interested people, attempted to set up state-level FEPCs. New York, in 1945, was the first to create a state FEPC and it became a model for other states to follow. The law had the strong backing of New York's Republican Governor Thomas E. Dewey. New York's was a strong Committee which quickly compiled an impressive record of achievement. The New York Committee furnished information and advice to interested groups in other states and its members travelled around the nation to help other states set up their own FEPCs. Ten states had enacted fair employment laws by 1950, though the effectiveness of these laws varied.⁴

² Louis Ruchmes, Race, Jobs, and Politics (New York, 1953), 126.

³ Donald R. McCoy and Richard T. Reutten, Quest and Response: Minority Rights and the Truman Administration (Lawrence, 1973), 23. This view is shared by Dalfiume but not by Berman or Barton J. Bernstein in his "The Ambiguous Legacy: The Truman Administration and Civil Rights," in Bernstein, editor, Politics and Policies of the Truman Administration (Chicago, 1970), 269-314.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 62.

The Seattle Civic Unity Committee's interest in creating a Washington State FEPC was not surprising but the way in which this small group of prominent citizens dominated the campaign was. The information made available to the CUC through the American Council on Race Relations (ACRR) and other national contacts through the Executive Secretary and individual members put the Committee in the position where other groups looked to it for leadership.

Minority employment had been one of the major concerns of the CUC from its inception. The new Committee immediately recognized the inevitable problem that would arise when the job market depressed as war industry wound down to normal production.⁵ The majority of the Committee thought that discharges should be made by racial quota to avoid trouble. Laurence Hewes, Jr., Regional Director of the ACRR, wrote to Ann Madsen, CUC Secretary, in November 1944 that job competition at the war's end would be a source of racial tension. "A few hours of conflict in a modern industrial city such as Seattle imposes tremendous economic and financial losses which can be averted by the wise expenditure of a relatively small amount of money for preventative purposes. . . ."⁶

The CUC called upon union officials to attend the May 3, 1945 meeting to discuss employment cutbacks. Jack Sullivan of the

⁵CUC Minutes, May 3, 1945. CUC I, 22-10.

⁶Hewes to Madsen, November 27, 1944. CUC I, 9-3.

Aero-Mechanics Union reported that it was still questionable whether or not black workers at Boeing holding work permits would be accepted by the International Machinists Union as full members. Union officials thought that cutbacks would be made on the basis of seniority.⁷ This worked against minority workers, the last to be hired. There is no mention in the Minutes of efforts to contact employers and this oversight is difficult to understand because, despite the strength of organized labor in Seattle, employer discrimination was at least as important an obstacle to minority employment as union discrimination was, except, possibly, in the case of Boeing, the city's largest employer. There is no evidence that the CUC attempted to influence the Aero-Mechanics Union further, apparently accepting the argument that it was helpless to act until the International had.

Even before the end of the war, the CUC endorsed with reservations a fair employment practices bill in the state legislature and sent Arthur Barnett to represent the Committee in Olympia.⁸ There are two versions of what happened to the bill, that of the moderate group that later controlled the campaign for a fair employment practices law and that of the radicals and liberals who led the fight in 1945. The moderates blamed the bill's failure on Democratic Governor Mon C. Wallgren for refusing to support it,

⁷ CUC Minutes, May 3, 1945. CUC I, 22-10.

⁸ CUC Minutes, March 15, 1945. CUC I, 22-9.

on the Democratic leadership of the Legislature, and on the "left-wing" group which sponsored it.⁹ The left-wing weekly newspaper New World, which supported fair employment legislation strongly until its demise in 1948, reported a different set of events.

The original committee promoting fair employment legislation was broadly based with representatives of labor unions, businessmen, church groups, and government and social agencies. Del Castle and Carl Brooks of the Ship Scalers Union, Ward Coley of the Building Services Union, all radicals, joined Dean Hart of the Urban League and Irene Miller and Reverend F. Benjamin Davis of the Civic Unity Committee on the original committee. There was some communist representation but it was small. When Civic Unity Committee support was forthcoming, the New World paid it close attention. Washington State Communist leader Henry Huff called the support group a "splendid coalition." The leadership of the coalition can fairly be characterized as "left-wing." The only opposition to the bill at the House Labor Committee hearings came from James Taylor, President of the Washington State Federation of Labor, the state's AFL organization, and the research director of the same body, Frank Rose. But many AFL unions demonstrated their support of the bill through the Joint Labor Lobby, which also represented all of the CIO unions.¹⁰

⁹"History of the Washington State Fair Employment Practices Committee," 1946. CUC I, 29-1.

¹⁰New World, January 11, 1945, January 25, 1945, February 15, 1945, February 22, 1945, and March 1, 1945.

The House passed the fair employment bill 61-36, in a non-partisan effort. One Republican House leader, Henry W. Cramer, had opposed the measure because it would prevent discrimination against Japanese-Americans who were "infiltrating" back to the Northwest. He was strongly rebuked by his fellow Republican Representative Clinton Harley. In the Senate, however, the bill died in the Rules Committee despite the Governor's statements on behalf of fair employment and his testimony before the Rules Committee.¹¹ The conservatives' charge that Wallgren did not support the bill was either a deliberate falsification or was made out of ignorance. The fact that their 1946 report did not mention that the bill passed the House in 1945 also tells us something about their efforts to belittle the left-wing leadership's efforts. But it was true, as the 1946 report on the "History of the Washington State Fair Employment Practices Committee" stated, that the leadership of the campaign passed from the "left-wing" to the conservatives soon after the 1945 defeat. The left did not, by any means, lose its interest in fair employment, however.

Another avenue to fair employment was being explored by a radical group in Seattle headed by Del Castle and Ward Coley. They proposed a city fair employment ordinance. CUC member Reverend F. Benjamin Davis of Mount Zion Baptist Church joined the city campaign, along with Dean Hart of the Urban League. But Chairman Greenwood of the CUC was

¹¹ Ibid., March 8, 1945 and March 15, 1945.

cool to the idea of a city ordinance, stating that he though it was a national and a state matter.¹² Castle and Coley continued to put pressure on the CUC to endorse the ordinance, which it did with reservations on February 7, 1946.¹³ But it is evident that the CUC was never really enthusiastic and disapproved of the group which sponsored the ordinance. The City Council rejected the measure.

Meanwhile, the Civic Unity Committee had taken a major role in the battle for a state FEPC. A letter was sent out under the sponsorship of five prestigious citizens, including George Greenwood, calling an organizational meeting and alluding to the passage of the New York law. At the subsequent June 13, 1945 meeting, an interim committee was appointed which included radicals Del Castle and John Caughlan, an attorney, with Arthur Barnett of the CUC representing a more moderate group. By the fall of 1945, however, "it was obvious that the 'pressure groups' would prefer to work through their own organization," according to the moderates' report. An informal agreement was made to have two organizations working on fair employment legislation.

The Interracial Action Group was headed by Castle and Caughlan and contemplated a mass movement to dramatize the issue and to educate the public. The Action Group held a series of meetings and diffused its

¹²CUC Minutes, May 24, 1945. CUC I, 22-10

¹³CUC Minutes, February 7, 1946. CUC I, 22-13.

attention to include local and national fair employment and to fighting social as well as economic discrimination. Its principal effort was aimed at promoting a city ordinance for fair employment and was concentrated on the Mayoral campaign in the early spring of 1946. A "mass meeting" was held January 24, 1946 and 3,000 signatures were gathered in support of a municipal ordinance. Mayor Devin and the incumbent City Councilmen were not stampeded and set a hearing on the matter for March 18, six days after the election. Devin and the incumbents won their respective elections and the Council then failed to pass the proposed ordinance. The Action Group was not heard from again, though individual members continued to play small roles in the campaign for fair employment.¹⁴

The more moderate group, led by Arthur Barnett, wanted to establish a broadly representative committee of respectable people to appeal to those not used to being involved in such activities and to use an "educational and slow approach." Some of the liberals and radicals also participated in the moderate group. Barnett acted as a liason between the two organizations.¹⁵ The more conservative group formed into the Washington State Fair Employment Practices Committee (WSFEPC).

¹⁴New World, October 4, 1945, January 24, 1946, January 31, 1946, and March 7, 1946.

¹⁵"History of the WSFEPC," 1946. CUC I, 29-1.

The WSFEPC opened its office in the CUC office on August 1, 1946 and began working toward passage of a fair employment law in the 1947 legislative session. Its close association with the CUC, which included use of office space and secretarial services until July 1948 as well as overlapping memberships and use of CUC national contacts for information, lasted until the law was passed in 1949. CUC Executive Secretary Irene Miller carried on the bulk of WSFEPC correspondence under CUC auspices between the 1947 defeat and the reorganization of the committee in 1948. The two chairmen of WSFEPC, Frank S. Bayley, Jr. and Frank P. Helsell, were both future presidents of the CUC.

In preparation for the 1947 legislative session, the WSFEPC prepared a tentative draft of a fair employment law. The legislative committee had the assistance of the New York Commission Against Discrimination and the Massachusetts FEPC. Several members visited the New York Commission in action. The committee wrote a strong bill combining the New York and Massachusetts laws. The leaders of WSFEPC were optimistic of passage in 1947.¹⁶

The other important work of the Committee preceding the opening of the legislative session was establishing broad-based community support and lining up legislative backing for their measure. This proved

¹⁶ Frank S. Bayley covering letter for draft law sent to legislators, January 1947. CUC I, 29-1.

more difficult because many people simply refused to believe that the need for such a law existed in the state of Washington and others felt it would be against their interests. Attorney Stephen F. Chadwick, who had served as National Commander of the American Legion in 1938 and 1939 and was a trustee of the Seattle Chamber of Commerce from 1931 to 1954, refused to lend his name to the WSFEPC on the grounds that such a bill was unnecessary and potentially harmful. "I myself am not yet convinced of the necessity of this type of legislation within the state of Washington," Chadwick wrote Bayley.

I am, of course, most interested in America remaining a land of equal opportunity for people of all classes and creeds; but I also entertain the thought that undue emphasis upon fancied discrimination often only breeds discrimination itself. I have also always taken pride that in the State of Washington the negro has been uniformly accepted as a free and equal citizen, and until there is greater evidence of discrimination than has ever come to my attention, I hesitate to join in advertising an issue which, in my opinion, does not thus far exist within this State.¹⁷

CUC Chairman Harry Elliot answered Chadwick's letter with a summary of racial discrimination in Washington in general and specific terms,¹⁸ but the general public probably remained at least as ignorant as Chadwick about the extent of racial discrimination.

¹⁷ Stephen F. Chadwick to Frank S. Bayley, October 7, 1946. CUC I, 29-10.

¹⁸ Harry Elliot to Chadwick, November 6, 1946. CUC I, 29-11.

Employers opposed to the law typically blamed the feelings of their employees for their position. For example, Elmer E. Todd, publisher of the Seattle Times, wrote the following to Bayley: "The question of employing all races without discrimination in a plant like the Seattle Times, which has five hundred employees, presents very serious problems owing to the objections of our employees to mingling with the other races in their daily work."¹⁹ Some businessmen feared that nonwhite employees exposed to the public would be detrimental to business. "At first glance, it would naturally seem that it is an extremely worthwhile effort but there is another angle," theater-owner John Danz wrote to the Vice-President of WSFEPC. "As an example, in our line of business, theaters, we have to be extremely careful as to the appearance of the employees who meet the public. . . ."²⁰

Some otherwise friendly people were discouraged by the Committee in order to avoid problems of public image. The Business and Professional Women's Club refused to support the proposed bill unless sex discrimination was also covered by it.²¹ The Committee refused to include sex discrimination, fearing it would confuse the issue.²² When Chairman Bayley

¹⁹ Elmer E. Todd to Frank S. Bayley, September 16, 1946. CUC I, 29-9.

²⁰ John Danz to Harold Barde, November 12, 1946. Anti-Defamation League of the B'nai B'rith, Seattle Chapter, Files (Hereafter cited as ADL Files.) Folder: Washington State FEPC, 1946-1948.

²¹ WSFEPC Minutes, November 12, 1946. CUC I, 29-3.

²² Bayley to Earl M. Anderson, October 18, 1946. CUC I, 29-11.

addressed a Yakima meeting attended mostly by blacks, social workers, and ministers, he asked that the group not do anything on behalf of the WSFEPC until it was more representative of the community. The Chairman told the Walla Walla Racial Unity Committee, which had some Communist members, that its support would do the bill more harm than good, and the group agreed.²³

WSFEPC strategy in the legislative session of 1947 consisted of convincing legislators that the taint of Communism had been removed from the backing of the bill and that its passage was both right and necessary. Copies of the proposed legislation and a letter from Chairman Bayley were sent to all State representatives and senators before the session opened.²⁴ An Executive Director, Gary Graham, was hired in November 1946 to talk with legislators, prepare publicity, supervise WSFEPC activities in Olympia, and follow the progress of the bill. All these activities were funded by membership dues to the Committee and contributions.

The extent of the nation-wide Republican landslide victory in the 1946 elections necessitated a change in the tactics of the Committee. The Republicans overwhelmingly controlled the state House 71 to 28, and the Senate was split 23-23. The Republican-dominated legislature was reluctant to create new commissions which would allow Democratic Governor Mon C. Wallgren to make new appointments. WSFEPC arranged

²³ WSFEPC Minutes, December 17, 1946. CUC I, 29-11.

²⁴ Bayley to various legislators. CUC I, 29-(14-16).

to have its bill introduced by Republican Representatives Goerge.V. Powell and Newell G. Banks from Seattle and made a number of compromises in the bill to gain Republican support.²⁵

The WSFEPC handling of the legislation caused a great deal of confusion among backers of fair employment laws. The original bill prepared by the Committee closely resembled the New York State law and won the support of all factions within the Committee. The second version of the bill, the one mailed to all state legislators, had cut some important provisions but was still acceptable to all groups within WSFEPC. This slightly battered version was introduced by Democratic State Senator Albert B. Rosellini of Seattle as SB 54 but was bottled up in Committee, unattended by the WSFEPC leadership in Olympia. The bill that finally got the support of the WSFEPC leadership was HB 26, introduced by Representatives Powell and Banks. The radical New World charged that "Bayley and other officials, in consultation with members of Mayor Devin's Seattle Civic Unity Committee, cut out more important sections of the bill. . . , " making it unacceptable to the left-wing faction of the WSFEPC.²⁶ The Washington State CIO News supported the Rosellini bill but opposed HB 26 as ineffectual.²⁷

²⁵ Bayley, "Report," March 12, 1947.. CUC I, 29-1.

²⁶ New World, February 13, 1947.

²⁷ Washington State CIO News, February, 1947.

At the Joint House and Senate Public Hearing, the Powell-Banks bill was supported by representatives of the NAACP, the B'nai B'rith, the Seattle Council of Churches, black veterans, and Nisei spokesmen. Opponents included a spokesman for the Industrial Conference Board, a Tacoma employers association, and Frank Rose, now labor director for the Washington State Republican party. The bill was also opposed by the National Negro Congress, a group with Communist affiliations, who called it a "sham," and "worse than no bill at all."²⁸ But Bayley had failed to notify the general membership of the WSFEPC about the hearings and had carefully chosen those who spoke for the bill. His speakers endorsed the principle of fair employment legislation without reference to the particular bill in question. The New World claimed that the labor representatives on the WSFEPC were not notified of the hearing by Bayley or by Republican State Senator Harold Zent, chairman of the joint committee.²⁹

When HB 26 was reported out of the Senate Labor Committee with emasculating amendments, the WSFEPC was prepared to oppose the new version as useless or worse. But the bill died in the Rules Committee before such action was called for. Before the 1947 session ended, the WSFEPC sought passage of a modified yet reasonably effective bill through personal letters and talks with individual legislators, avoiding pressure

²⁸ New World, February 13, 1947.

²⁹ Ibid.

tactics. The expected Republican support for this modified bill was not forthcoming.³⁰ Radicals followed the lead of the National Negro Congress in urging the passage of the original WSFEPC draft bill which resembled New York's law and was much stronger than HB 26. Rosellini introduced this bill as SB 259, but it failed to clear the Rules Committee by a vote of 27 to 15. Two Republican Senators broke ranks and voted with Rosellini, including Alfred Westberg.³¹

Before the WSFEPC ceased activity, Chairman Bayley made recommendations for the next fair employment campaign for the 1949 legislature. Bayley advised that the purpose of the Committee "is not to sharpen racial antagonisms, which is the method of American Communists, but rather to work for interracial understanding." He also counselled that the WSFEPC remain non-partisan and devoted exclusively to the passage of fair employment legislation. He urged that data be gathered on racial discrimination in employment and that the educational approach be stressed.³²

The Civic Unity Committee was also interested in why the bill had been turned down for the second time and sent out a questionnaire to the legislators inquiring into their attitudes toward fair employment laws. Most Republican lawmakers who replied thought that race relations could not be bettered through legislation, that employers had fundamental rights

³⁰ Bayley, "Report."

³¹ New World, March 13, 1947.

³² Bayley, "Report."

about whom they could hire, that stress should be put on education rather than legislation, and that color discrimination was not very widespread in Washington.³³ (Democrats were apparently not polled.) The results of the questionnaire convinced the CUC that the most important shortcomings of the 1947 campaign for the fair employment law had been the lack of hard evidence on racial discrimination in employment.

To fill this gap, the Civic Unity Committee requested the Institute of Labor Economics at the University of Washington to make the study "Job Opportunities for Racial Minorities in the Seattle Area" and contributed \$300 to the effort. An early student of the fair employment campaign believes that this study played a significant role in the passage of the 1949 bill.³⁴

The research of the Institute of Labor Economics, conducted during the summer of 1948, uncovered a bleak and unpromising picture for minority employment in Seattle. From the full employment during wartime, the job picture worsened for all groups. But the labor cutbacks disproportionately affected the minority communities, especially the greatly enlarged black community. While 3.11 percent of the white work force was unemployed in 1948, 16.58 percent of black labor and 4.11 percent of all other minorities was.³⁵ Furthermore, jobs for minorities were

³³ Stanley Hugh Smith, Freedom to Work (New York, 1955), 127.

³⁴ Ibid., 129-130.

³⁵ Institute of Labor Economics, University of Washington, "Job Opportunities for Racial Minorities in the Seattle Area" (Seattle, 1948), 9.

concentrated in the least desirable categories of employment and mostly in firms with little chance for expansion of jobs. The authors were forced to conclude that "future job opportunities for racial minorities relative to future job opportunities for whites are less than at present."³⁶

Besides initiating and partially funding the study, the CUC took over the routine work of the WSFEPC after legislative defeat. Mrs. Miller carried on the bulk of correspondence about fair employment under CUC auspices. Frank S. Bayley, Jr. remained as head of the organization until it opened an office separate from the CUC in July 1948 and changed its name to the Washington State Committee Against Discrimination in Employment (WSCADE) to avoid confusion with the national FEP Committee and its campaign. Frank P. Helsell was elected chairman at that time and he began preparing for the 1949 campaign.³⁷ E. W. Van Valkenburg was hired as Executive Director. The CUC continued to play an active role in the campaign, providing information and national contacts which greatly assisted the effort. Important meetings continued to be held in the CUC office, including a November 5, 1948 gathering which designated Republican State Senator Alfred J. Westberg of Seattle to introduce the fair employment bill to the legislature.³⁸

³⁶ Ibid., 10-11.

³⁷ CUC I, 29-22.

³⁸ Smith, Freedom to Work, 135.

A difference of opinion on the type of campaign to be waged by the WSCADE developed between Mrs. Miller of the CUC and Nap P. Dotson, Executive Secretary of the Seattle Urban League. Dotson argued for a strong state-wide campaign to educate the people of the need for such legislation.³⁹ Mrs. Miller opposed the mass-organization approach, arguing that the bill should have prominent and influential sponsors and should concentrate its educational efforts on the relatively few persons vital to the passage of the legislation, especially the members of key legislative committees and the person who would introduce the legislation.⁴⁰ This elitist position was characteristic of the CUC mentality. It was probably rightly suspicious of the ability of the mass of white people to support movements for racial justice, and thus decided to bypass the masses with enlightened leadership. Then it would use enforcement of the law to educate the public.

There was also disagreement about the role minority groups would play. Mrs. Miller opposed racial or religious minorities taking a leading role in the campaign, believing that this would hurt the cause more than it would help. Her ideas prevailed,⁴¹ partly because she was able to demonstrate that they were already proven in other states and partly because

³⁹ Ibid., 136.

⁴⁰ E. W. Van Valkenburg, "How We Did It in Washington." CUC I, 29-1.

⁴¹ Smith, Freedom to Work, 136.

whites active in civil rights had not yet outgrown their paternalistic approach to racial equality. Consequently, Dotson refused to provide Van Valkenburg with the Urban League's extensive information on employment discrimination. The Urban League played a very small role in the campaign and bad feelings were created between the CUC and the Washington State Board Against Discrimination on the one hand and the Urban League on the other.⁴²

The WSCADE gathered information from the fair employment commissioners of New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New Jersey, and from the American Council on Race Relations, the National Association of Intergroup Relations Organizations, and the American Jewish Committee. The latter group arranged for the appearance in Seattle of Henry Spitz, general council to the New York Commission, who spoke with key legislators and was able to dispel some of their fears about the functioning of fair employment laws. Executive Director Van Valkenburg identified Spitz's visit as a key point in the campaign and credited him with enabling the WSCADE to resist crippling amendments to the proposed law.⁴³

The only overt opposition to the 1949 bill came from the Railroad Brotherhoods. Van Valkenburg suspected that other unions and employers

⁴² Lewis Watts, "Summary on the Washington State Board Against Discrimination." Urban League Papers, University of Washington Library Manuscript Collection, Parts I and II, Box 34, Folder 36.

⁴³ Van Valkenburg, "How We Did It in Washington."

lobbied against the bill behind the scenes but there is no evidence of this. In the final estimation of the WSCADE, what opposition existed was overconfident and failed to act until it was too late to stop the measure.⁴⁴ The Seattle Post-Intelligencer hailed the bill as putting Washington in the forefront of fair employment legislation with New York and three other states. The bill was guided through the Senate by Republican State Senator Westberg and WSCADE lobbyist Van Valkenburg with only six negative votes.⁴⁵ The Democrats, back in control of the House, were bound by their party platform's commitment to fair employment legislation and they quickly pushed the bill through.⁴⁶

The law signed by the new Republican Governor Arthur Langlie in March 1949 proclaimed that discrimination in employment against any person living in the state to be a matter of "state concern" and that such discrimination "threatens not only the rights and proper privileges of its inhabitants but menaces the institutions and foundations of a free democratic state." The law created a state agency to reduce and eliminate such discrimination. Section 2 of the law recognized "the opportunity to obtain employment without discrimination because of race, creed, color, or national origin" to be a civil right. Section 3 sharply defined the terms of

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Seattle Post-Intelligencer, February 23, 1949.

⁴⁶ Smith, Freedom to Work, 146.

the act. Section 4 set up the structure of the Washington State Board Against Discrimination in Employment, providing for the appointment by the Governor of five nominally paid members. Section 6 defined the functions, powers, and duties of the Board. It had the power to appoint an executive secretary and other investigators and assistants necessary. The Board had the authority to receive, investigate, and pass upon complaints of discrimination. The Board also had the power to hold hearings, subpoena witnesses, books, and papers with the power of the superior court to enforce those subpoenas. Finally, the Board had the power to set up advisory agencies or conciliation councils to aid it in its work.

Section 7 defined what constituted discrimination by an employer, a labor union, and an employment agency. Washington, unlike most other states with fair employment laws including its model New York, did not make unlawful discrimination in job promotion. Section 8 outlined the procedure for filing a complaint and the procedure of the Board once the complaint was received. The Board had the power to initiate a complaint. When reasonable cause for complaint was found, conference, conciliation, and persuasion would be employed to eliminate the unfair practice. Should this procedure fail, the Chairman would set up a hearing to weigh evidence and either issue a cease and desist order to the discriminator or dismiss the complaint. Section 9 reiterated that the Board may petition the appropriate superior court to enforce any of its orders. No court of the state had jurisdiction to issue any restraining order or injunction which prevented

the Board from performing its function. Section 10 provided that it would be a misdemeanor for any person, employer, labor union or employment agency to resist, prevent, impede, or interfere with the Board or its representatives in the performance of its duty. Section 12 insists that the provisions of the act "be construed liberally for the accomplishment of the purpose thereof."⁴⁷

The fight for a state fair employment practices law in Washington was waged on Civic Unity Committee terms. The CUC took a leading role in the campaign and was able to set its tone. The WSCADE ran a quiet, non-controversial, non-Communist and almost lily-white campaign based on facts gathered from local and national studies. The leaders involved were respected members of the community who could not be questioned about having radical motives. Communists had ceased to be a political force after following Henry Wallace into obscurity in the 1948 elections, and their disappearance made the WSCADE's job easier. Opposition failed to coalesce as it did against the pressure tactics in 1945. This approach was suited to the times, the late 1940s, and the success of the fair employment campaign is an example of the CUC at its best. But what the Civic Unity Committee and, for that matter, the Washington State Board Against Discrimination in Employment were never able to do was to make enough people conscious of the fact that racial discrimination did exist.

⁴⁷The Washington State Law Against Discrimination in Employment, 43-1, Chapter 183, Law of 1949.

Nor was it realized that black people had to play a significant role in the fight if real progress was to be made.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONTINUING EFFORTS FOR FAIR EMPLOYMENT, 1949-1964

The creation of the Washington State Board Against Discrimination in Employment did not bind up the divisions between the moderate white advocates of civil rights, their black counterparts, and the more radical advocates. While the goals of all factions, equal opportunity for employment and integration of the total work force, were the same, the strategy and tactics of the different groups often put them at odds with one another. It was the failure of the WSBAD to change the discriminatory pattern of employment so detrimental to minorities that caused continued friction between the various interested groups. In spite of that failure old programs for improving employment opportunities were continued and expanded and new ones were created. This chapter will assess the impact of the WSBAD on minority employment opportunities and examine its relationships with other civil rights groups. The program of the WSBAD will be compared and contrasted with the continuing work of the Seattle Urban League, already a leader in the field in 1949, and the new and militant approach of Seattle CORE in the early 1960s.

Controversy between the moderate whites, led by Irene Miller of the Civic Unity Committee, and the black civil rights groups flared up over the issue of the Governor's appointments to the new Board. Miller

recommended that no blacks be appointed so as not to threaten those employers not sure about fair employment. The black community strongly opposed this policy, and thirty prominent black leaders met and sent the name of black Republican leader Reverend Fountain W. Penick to Governor Langlie.¹ Penick, of Seattle's First African Methodist Episcopal Church, and Mrs. Robert M. Jones, a white member of the CUC, were the only two appointees that pleased the black community; other appointees represented other points of view.

For Chairman, Governor Langlie chose an old political ally, David Lockwood. Lockwood, a Savings and Loan executive, had been elected to the Seattle City Council in the mid-1930s with the backing of the same conservative reform group that elected Langlie to the same body, the New Order of Cincinnatus.² During Langlie's first term as Governor, Lockwood served as State Director of Finance, Budget and Business. The Eastern Washington representative on the Board was Richard W. Axtell, manager and labor relations man for the Associated Industries of the Inland Empire. The fifth member of the Board was Father Jerome L.

¹ Lewis Watts, "Summary on Washington State Fair Employment Practices Law." Urban League Papers, University of Washington Library Manuscripts Collection, Parts I and II, Box 34, Folder 36. (Hereafter cited as Urban League Papers, I-II, 34-36.)

² George W. Scott, "The New Order of Cincinnatus: Municipal Politics in Seattle During the 1930s," Pacific Northwest Quarterly 64 (October 1973), 137-146.

Toner, a teacher of labor relations at St. Martin's College. While the latter two men had experience in labor relations, their outlooks were more sensitive to the interests of management and white union labor than to minorities. Axtell was looking at the picture from management's point of view. Toner proved to be an advocate of white labor or the "hard hat" point of view,³ and for over a decade was a strong and sometimes devious force for holding back and limiting the work of the WSBAD.

Another source of contention from the very beginning of the WSBAD was its Executive Director for the first decade, Glen E. Mansfield. Mansfield, who had been a high school teacher and head of the claims division of the War Assets Administration for the four northwestern states, was chosen over Seattle Urban League Industrial Secretary Horace C. Woodland.⁴ Mansfield's qualifications for the job were questioned from the outset, and when his performance did not live up to their expectations for the Board, groups such as the Urban League, the NAACP, and the Anti-Defamation League periodically called for his dismissal.

An early and unpublished study of the WSBAD and the minority employment situation was Andrew F. Brimmer's 1951 Masters Thesis

³Interview with Kenneth A. MacDonald, January 9, 1974. University of Washington Library Manuscripts Collection.

⁴Watts, "Summary."

"Some Aspects of Fair Employment,"⁵ which pointed out the glaring faults and limitations of the new Board. Brimmer began by unfavorably comparing the Washington State fair employment law with its New York State counterpart. The New York Commissioners each received \$10,000 per year salaries plus expenses while the Washington Board members received \$20 per day on duty plus expenses. The New York law enabled the State Industrial Commission and the Attorney General to undertake investigations concerning discriminatory practices even though no formal complaint was made with the Commission; in Washington, only an aggrieved person or the Board had the power to file a complaint. And finally, though not inherent in the law, it was evident that the New York Commission would be far better funded than the WSBAD.⁶

Brimmer found the WSBAD's December 1950 claim that discrimination in employment had been reduced since its appointment "to be thoroughly unwarranted." He found the Board to be doing work "commensurate to the ability of its members and the limitations inherent in the structure and powers of the Board as an organization [as determined by law]. Without discussing the qualifications of the various Board members, suffice it to say that there appears to be very little in the backgrounds

⁵University of Washington. Brimmer went on to become an eminent economist and the first black member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System.

⁶Ibid., 203-204.

of some—and nothing in the backgrounds of others—which would qualify them to serve as investigators and judges of so complex an area of economic activity."⁷ Taking exception with the Board's belief that discrimination was declining, Brimmer wrote "that the only reasonable conclusion which can be drawn from the Board's experience is that, at this point, very little is known about the nature and extent of discrimination in the State of Washington; and the only reasonable coefficient of expectations appears to be one of tempered pessimism."⁸

Brimmer identified the absence of public and employer awareness of the law's existence as a primary reason for the small impact of the Board on the problem. A May 1949 poll revealed that only fifteen percent of Washington residents knew of the law against discrimination in employment.⁹ Seattle, which had the largest percentage of minority people, was polled in the fall of 1949 and only thirty-seven percent of its residents knew of the law.¹⁰ More importantly, many employers had not heard of it.¹¹ But the law was less than a year old and employers, if not the general public, probably became aware of it before very long.

⁷ Ibid., 227-228.

⁸ Ibid., 227-228.

⁹ Ibid., 219-220.

¹⁰ Ibid., 220.

¹¹ Ibid., 230.

One of Brimmer's conclusions was that fair employment had a much better chance in a full-employment economy, when white labor was not fearful of job security and management was not fearful of disruption of production. Despite the activities of the WSBAD, the state of the economy determined the employment opportunities open to nonwhite persons to a large extent. Postwar unemployment kept climbing in Washington from the end of the Second World War until the Korean War.¹² The Korean War had reversed the trend by July 1950, and by mid-1951 there was an acute labor shortage in the Pacific Northwest. Nineteen Fifty-Two was the best year for postwar employment to that time, but the end of the war again caused economic dislocation. In March 1954, the Seattle Post-Intelligencer gave evidence of Seattle's high unemployment and predicted that this was not a temporary phenomenon.¹³ The fortunes of nonwhite workers were more affected by these ups and downs than were white workers, because they were on the margins of the economy. The State Board could do little to change these economic realities.

When the WSBAD began operation in June 1949, it relied to a great extent upon the experienced Seattle Civic Unity Committee for information and contacts. CUC President Frank Helsell was preparing an article for the Washington Law Review on state FEPCs and was in contact

¹² Seattle Post-Intelligencer, August 1, 1945; August 28, 1945; and December 18, 1949.

¹³ Ibid., July 20, 1950; May 25, 1951; January 10, 1953; and March 14, 1954.

with the various state committees around the nation as well as with major civil rights organizations.¹⁴ This information was passed along to the WSBAD. CUC executive secretary Irene Miller wrote a series of memos to Glen Mansfield making such suggestions as distributing the pamphlet "Prejudice Won't Hide," already ordered by the Seattle School District, to school districts around the state. The CUC publicized gains in fair employment brought about by the Board in its monthly publication Fair Play.¹⁵ After six months of operations, Glen Mansfield wrote Irene Miller a note of appreciation. "We are becoming more and more indebted to your organization and to you personally. Any measure of success that this Board may achieve must, to a large degree, be laid to your door."¹⁶

The Civic Unity Committee maintained close ties with the WSBAD for the first seven years of its existence. During that time an active member of the Civic Unity Committee sat on the Board. Mrs. Robert M. Jones served on the Board from its inception to 1954, George H. Revelle was Chairman of the Board from 1952 to 1955, and Alfred J. Westberg served the Board as Chairman from 1955 to 1957 and as a member in 1958 while concurrently serving as CUC President in 1957 and 1958. The CUC referred many cases to the WSBAD. Its Annual Northwest Institute on Race Relations was completely devoted to fair employment practices in

¹⁴CUC I, 20-22 and 20-22a.

¹⁵CUC I, 20-22a.

¹⁶CUC I, 20-22.

1949, 1951 and 1952. Fair Play continued to publicize the Board's work. The CUC was a staunch supporter of the WSBAD in its budget fights with the Governor and legislature every other year.¹⁷ It was in the forefront of the campaigns to strengthen the public accommodations section of the state civil rights law and to place the enforcement of the strengthened law under the jurisdiction of the WSBAD. It played an important role in extending the Board's coverage to include publically-assisted housing in 1957.

With the passage of the fair employment act in 1949, the Public Accommodations Act in 1953, and the Omnibus Civil Rights Act of 1957, many of the most important activities of the Civic Unity Committee were transferred to the Washington State Board Against Discrimination. The CUC referred all cases which could be under the jurisdiction of the Board to it and continued to advocate broader jurisdiction for the Board. It was for the first seven years that CUC philosophy and tactics were especially influential on the WSBAD's operations, though it continued to support the Board until 1964.

The members of the Civic Unity Committee took comfort in the fact that the WSBAD had some members with ideas about civil rights much the same as their own. Black leaders and more liberal white Democrats

¹⁷ Harry Elliot to Governor Arthur Langlie, February 12, 1951.
CUC I, 20-22a. John Heitzman to Senator Asa Clark, January 20, 1953.
CUC I, 20-23.

clearly did not share that view of the Board. Critics of the WSBAD E appeared almost immediately. Blacks were quickly angered by the action of the Board in favor of the employer in twenty-three of the twenty-four cases decided in the first eleven months to May 1950, especially when the Board used such figures to prove that it was successfully wiping out discrimination in employment.

Relations between the WSBAD E and the various local branches of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People were particularly strained. A mid-1950 NAACP meeting in Seattle brought out such sentiments as expressed in the following letter to the Northwest Enterprise.

[I]t is plain that the committee is in grave danger of becoming an official agency to prevent anything really being done about discrimination in employment.

In eleven months of existence, not one case prosecuted! The great majority of cases filed with the board already decided—against the person suffering discrimination. . . .

The official report of the board claims achievement only in the case of a Seattle department store. Yet every informed person knows that these gains were made by a citizens group apart from the board.

. . . The board plainly has enormous powers for initiation and enforcement; yet they indicated their wholehearted acceptance of lily-white industries and lily-white unions, based openly on past discrimination, just as long as present open discrimination was not practiced.¹⁸

This particular letter-writer over-estimated the power of the Board, crippled as it was by lack of funds, and underestimated the commitment of the

¹⁷ Harry Elliot to Governor Arthur Langlie, February 12, 1951. CUC I, 20-22a. John Heitzman to Senator Asa Clark, January 20, 1953. CUC I, 20-23.

¹⁸ Northwest Enterprise, clipping c. May 1950. CUC I, 20-22.

Board to end discrimination. But an element of truth remained: The Board members had a very limited idea of their task. The NAACP continued to be a critic of the WSBADe but never developed its own program to supplement that of the Board. Its primary focus was never fair employment.

The citizens group referred to in the above quotation was the Citizens' Committee for Fair Employment and the department store Frederick and Nelson's, a part of the Marshall Field chain.¹⁹ The Citizens' Committee was an organization of mostly white members with ties to the radical Washington State Pension Union and the remnant of the State's Progressive Party. It supported Pension Union initiatives for unemployment compensation and a state social security program in 1950. James McDaniel, its black leader, was a delegate to the 1950 Progressive Party state convention where he called for a state-wide boycott of Safeway stores in protest of the food chain's failure to comply with the 1949 fair employment law.²⁰ Safeway, the Citizens' Committee's major target, failed to respond to negotiations, picketing, or the boycott and sought the assistance of the WSBADe, the CUC, and the Seattle Urban League.

¹⁹ Mrs. Miller received an inquiry about the hiring of nonwhite clerks at Frederick and Nelson's from the Chicago Committee on Human Relations which had been negotiating for fair employment unsuccessfully with Marshall Fields. This is another example of the nation-wide network in operation. Sonya Sammel to Miller, April 28, 1950. CUC I, 20-22.

²⁰ Daily People's World (Northwest Edition), January 13, 1950 - May 26, 1950.

The Citizens' Committee tried to involve the Civic Unity Committee and the Urban League in its negotiations with other department stores and its picketing of Safeway stores but was rebuffed. The CUC and Urban League considered the Citizens' Committee to be too radical and supported the Safeway's local management in its refusal to hire any minorities while being picketed. Reverend Penick of the WSBADDE concurred and promised that the Board would not pressure Safeway while the picketing continued. This was in spite of the fact that Safeway's management took responsibility for its poor relations with the nonwhite community because it was reluctant to hire minority people for fear of losing white business.²¹ It was agreed to postpone fair employment practices in order to deny the radical Citizens' Committee credit for opening up jobs.

The Seattle Urban League's relationship with the WSBADDE was a complementary one. The Urban League referred more cases to the state Board than any other agency,²² but, unlike the CUC, it followed up those cases to make sure that they were handled satisfactorily. Clashes between the two agencies often came as a result of the actions taken by the WSBADDE on these cases. In addition to the referring of specific cases, the Urban League continued its own employment programs which included industry-wide projects to open jobs to qualified minority people and an informal

²¹ Lewis Watts, "Safeway Case Record—Conference with Mr. Kane," July 20, 1950. Urban League Papers, I-II, 34-33.

²² Stanley Hugh Smith, Freedom to Work (New York, 1955), 193-194.

referral service for job-seekers and employers.

The National Urban League had from its formation in 1911 taken the improvement of economic conditions among black people as one of its most important functions. It had long specialized in employer relationships to minority workers.²³ In that mold, the Seattle Urban League directed much of its energies to employment of minorities. As an informal employment agency, it solicited the names of blacks and a few Asian job-hunters and tried to find positions that matched their skills. Employers searching specifically for minority help inquired through the Urban League. This service had been used extensively just prior to and during World War II, continued to operate in the postwar years and after the WSBAD was created, and is still in operation.

One of the Urban League's most important functions was its negotiations with representative leaders of broad industrial or business groups, or with the management of large individual companies, aimed at opening new fields to minority workers as they attained the necessary qualifications and skills. The Urban League was particularly active in this kind of program in the years 1949 to 1953 and after 1960. In the early period, some representative projects were the banking industry, the U. S. Atomic Energy Commission and its prime contractor General Electric at Hanford and Richland, Washington, the brewing industry, and large retail stores. In

²³ John Hope Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom (New York, 1955), 193-194.

the early 1960s, the Urban League along with the WSBAD and other agencies enjoyed a great success in the fair employment practices of Century 21, the World's Fair in Seattle. In 1963, the League began a long term project called Job Development. In all of these projects, the Urban League was characteristically cautious about maintaining good relations with the employers they were dealing with and about supplying qualified and attractive job candidates.²⁴ The Urban League focused its activities on those minority people who had risen above the masses by acquiring education and skills.

A good example of the Urban League's method of opening employment to minority people is the bank project of the early 1950s. The project was opened not because of a specific complaint of discrimination but because there were no black white collar workers in Seattle banks. The Urban League approached two banks because they were the largest in the city and one because of its location in the cosmopolitan University District. The first contacts were made through Mayor Devin and were followed up by visits of the Urban League Executive Lewis Watts and Industrial Secretary Morris Brooks, Jr. with officers of the banks. At one such meeting, Lewis Watts told the President of University National Bank "that I had not referred Negroes to the Bank because sufficient ground work had not been done. I further added that the Urban League only refers

²⁴ For earlier cases see Case Files. Urban League Papers, I-II, Boxes 34-36. For Century 21, see Box 15. For Job Development, see I-II, 40-8, and IV, Boxes 3 and 4.

qualified applicants and that we were beginning to explore the possibilities of Negroes in banks because there were qualified Negroes in the community at the present time." The Urban League attempted to allay the fears of management by presenting evidence of successful integration of bank employees in other parts of the country. Banks resisted integration of their work force and resented being singled out by the Urban League for experimentation. But the Urban League persisted, kept channels to leading bankers open and relations cordial, and bank jobs began slowly opening up to minorities in the late 1950s.²⁵

In its relations with the WSBAD, the Urban League seemed sincere in its efforts to cooperate with and further the work of the Board. But friction between the two agencies arose over the Urban League's insistence on following up the cases it referred and its disappointment with the way in which many were handled. It was particularly critical of the Board's failure to win the confidence of the minority communities. Many nonwhites who felt that they had been discriminated against while seeking employment were reluctant to take their case to the WSBAD because it decided the majority of cases against the complainants.²⁶ The Urban League had to

²⁵"Bank Project." Urban League Papers, I-II, 34-33.

²⁶In the period 1949 to 1959, the Board handled 582 formal complaints. In 261 cases no discrimination was found, in 57 the Board ruled it had no jurisdiction. Sixteen complaints were withdrawn by the complainant. In 228 cases discrimination was found and conciliated. In 5 cases, discrimination was found and a hearing was necessary to settle the matter, all after 1956. WSBAD, "Report of Progress, 1959." Similar statistical ratios continued into the 1960s, with the exception that more hearings were held. See WSBAD Annual Reports.

talk some of its clients into filing formal complaints with the Board and then, because the WSBAD offered complainants no assistance, had to aid them in the preparation of the complaint.²⁷

Personal relations were strained so much in 1953 that the Urban League appointed its own liaison to the Board to work out the difficulties. But the WSBAD members and staff were defensive about any criticism, especially Executive Secretary Glen Mansfield. The other individual who was considered troublesome by the Urban League was Father Toner. Toner told Urban League Executive Lewis Watts that the Board's hands were tied in most cases because the law had no teeth in it. Watts was shocked that a Board member did not believe in the law he was working under and replied that, on the contrary, the law had enough strength to accomplish far more than it had. Toner's aggressive and opinionated manner was another cause of friction.²⁸

During 1955, because of the severe criticism of the WSBAD²⁹ by the Seattle NAACP, WSBAD Chairman George Revelle asked the Urban League to review the Board's records and work and to report on its findings. A committee was formed consisting of Reverend Aron Gilmartin, Mrs. Mareta Harris, Rabbi Michael Robinson, Dr. Robert Joyner, and Reverend C. D. Toliver. The committee did not have free access to the records and

²⁷Watts, "Summary."

²⁸Ibid. Kenneth MacDonald confirms this aspect of Toner's personality.

²⁹"Employment" was dropped from the Board's title in 1953.

had to rely to a great extent on the testimony of Mansfield. It issued a first report in October 1955, but the WSBAD refused to discuss it and demanded that it be destroyed because of some of the confidential material contained. When a second report was presented, according to Lewis Watts, "There was tremendous resentment, and generally, a non-cooperative attitude was displayed by the [WSBAD]," especially by Father Toner and Mrs. Jones.³⁰ The report consisted only of recommendations and did not deal with past cases. It urged the Board to systematize its record-keeping and to preserve specific data for analysis and evaluation. It recommended that "the Commission utilize the specific complaint to aggressively effect positive change in the overall employment policies and practices of the respondent." The Committee entreated the WSBAD to improve its public relations with minority communities, suggesting that one way to accomplish this would be to develop "keener sensitivity and insight to the still prevalent everyday problems of members of the minority groups." Finally, it recommended that the WSBAD use the media to interpret its aims and accomplishments to the public.³¹

In the spring of 1956, Urban League representatives joined a large delegation of people from several interested groups which met with Governor Langlie to notify him of the WSBAD's poor reputation. The

³⁰Watts, "Summary."

³¹"Report of the Urban League Committee." Urban League Papers, I-II, 34-36.

group urged Langlie to appoint Alfred Westberg to succeed the retiring George Revelle as Chairman. The delegation also urged that Father Toner not be reappointed. Langlie promised to appoint Westberg, which he soon did, but informed them that he had already reappointed Father Toner. Following the meeting, the Governor did ask Glen Mansfield to establish better public relations and allocated funds for the Board to move to new offices that offered more privacy than the old ones in the State Highway Patrol Headquarters.³²

Glen Mansfield's administration of the WSBAD and his performance on specific cases continued to be a sore spot in relations between the Urban League and the Board. Mansfield was severely criticized by the Urban League in 1956 for his handling of two of the cases it referred in which he advised the complainant not to file formal complaints. One of these concerned seven black men who were rejected for employment as service station attendants by the Standard Oil Company which employed no blacks in its West Coast stations. In this case, Mansfield argued that he could do a better job of educating the employer informally, but he had not followed up and there were still no black employees after a significant period of time. In a meeting with Mansfield and Urban League representatives, Chairman Alfred Westberg agreed with the Urban League on this point.³³

³²Watts, "Summary."

³³Ibid.

Finally, with the reorganization of the WSBAD after passage of the Omnibus Civil Rights Law of 1957, the Urban League joined the NAACP, the ADL, and the American Jewish Committee in calling for Mansfield's dismissal.³⁴ Mansfield was upheld by the Board. In a letter to Willard Wright, President of the Seattle Urban League, Westberg countered the complaint that Mansfield lacked formal training for the job by arguing that his eight years experience as executive outweighed the lack of training. Westberg dismissed the charge that Mansfield lacked "sensitivity" towards minority problems and argued that his responsibility was to uphold the law and carry out Board policy in an objective manner in any case, regardless of where his sympathies lay.³⁵

The Republican years of the Washington State Board Against Discrimination, 1950-1957, was an unproductive period. During this time, the Board's jurisdiction was broadened to include public accommodations in 1953 and publicly-assisted housing in 1957. But the Board's work was mostly involved in case work in which it chose to take a narrow rather than a liberal interpretation of the law under which it operated. Most cases were decided in favor of the employer, and even when the Board found

³⁴Aron S. Gilmartin, Seattle Urban League, to Sam W. Tarshis, ADL, March 12, 1957. Urban League Papers I-II, 12-17.

³⁵Westberg to Wright, April 30, 1957. Philip Burton Papers, University of Washington Library Manuscripts Collection, 1-39.

"probable cause" it was not always able to secure redress for the complainant. In several cases where discrimination was found and supposedly worked out to the satisfaction of both parties by "conference and conciliation," the discriminating employer failed to abide by the agreement and the Board failed to follow up with "cease and desist" orders. One such case involved the Northern Pacific Railroad in 1955, and the Board finally re-entered the case under pressure from the Seattle NAACP and Urban League.³⁶ The WSBAD made some attempts at educating the public about discrimination against minorities in employment, mostly through distribution of literature and personal appearances at public meetings, but was hindered by an inadequate budget. It did not make use of its most potent tools of education, the initiation of investigations of its own and the public hearing. Mansfield, reflecting the sentiments of the Board, shied away from the hearing as an undesirable attention-getting device. In an article in the July 4, 1956 Seattle Times, Mansfield proudly wrote that "not once has it become necessary to call a public hearing or to issue a 'cease and desist' order under provisions of the statute." It seemed that the Board felt that as long as it avoided controversy it was doing a good job.

It was the visibility of the Washington State Board Against Discrimination under the appointees of Democratic Governor Albert D. Rosellini that distinguished it from the Board in the Langlie years and

³⁶Watts, "Summary."

made it a more effective agency. Rosellini named men of action and commitment to the cause of civil rights to the Board. While the Rosellini Board continued to play only a small role in opening opportunities to minorities through its specific case work, through the efforts of a few men and women it was able to help raise the level of public awareness about the realities of racial discrimination in Washington State. It should be remembered that this change took place against the background of ever-increasing civil rights activity in the South and media coverage of it. This phenomenon made it easier for Rosellini to appoint the kind of men and women that could change the Board's public posture and for the Board to take tougher positions against discrimination and to get more attention for its work.

Sidney Gerber, a wealthy retired businessman with a flair for and dedication to the causes of minorities, was appointed Chairman in mid-1957. Gerber was an aggressive chairman and moved the Board towards a new visibility through public hearings and media coverage. He was also a difficult man personally and clashed with the two Executive Directors who served under him, Glen Mansfield and Malcolm Higgins, over the respective domains of the policy-makers and the administrators. In 1962, Gerber became more and more frustrated with the Board's very limited success in creating better opportunities for minorities through the case method and more interested in acting outside the Board. (See Chapter Six) He became an embarrassment to the Board when he was openly critical of

its methods and accomplishments. Kenneth MacDonald, his successor as Chairman, recommended to Rosellini that Gerber not be reappointed, and, after months of inaction by the Governor, Gerber resigned.³⁷

Kenneth A. MacDonald served on the Board for a decade beginning in 1958, and was Chairman from 1962 to 1968. MacDonald had established a reputation as a civil liberties lawyer in many loyalty and security trials of the early 1950s, and had worked on the Omnibus Civil Rights Act of 1957 as counsel to the Democratic caucus of the State House of Representatives. As a Board member and as Chairman, MacDonald supported and initiated more aggressive action by the WSBAD and more exposure to the public through the media. He remembers that while the Board had practically no impact on the solving of the racial problems it was created to deal with, it did at least bring those problems to the public's attention. "There was at least turmoil and there was talk and there was anger," he recalled. "It was known that things were happening."³⁸ There was a sense of futility in the work: MacDonald felt that people came to Board meetings and hearings for entertainment, to see the earnest blacks and whites perform.³⁹

³⁷ For Gerber's side of the story, see the Sidney Gerber Papers, University of Washington Library Manuscripts Collection, 10-22. For MacDonald's side, see MacDonald interview.

³⁹ MacDonald interview.

Fred Haley was another vigorous Rosellini appointee. A Tacoma candy manufacturer, Haley concentrated his work as a member of the WSBAD on educational opportunity for minorities. Black Board members who made valuable contributions were Ola Browning, Roberta Byrd, and Calvin Johnson. Board members travelled around the state, visiting school boards, county commissioners, and city councils.

Malcolm Higgins replaced the controversial Glen Mansfield as Executive Director in 1960. Mansfield remained with the Board as a field investigator and by many accounts grew in stature as a civil rights worker.⁴⁰ Higgins proved an able and strong administrator who pushed for Board-initiated investigations of discrimination and for more public hearings. Higgins helped set the new tone of the WSBAD. Unfortunately, his clash with another strong personality, Sidney Gerber, probably hurt the cause of minority rights that both men were dedicated to serving. Gerber was forced to stay out of administrative affairs, and his departure from the Board allowed things to run more smoothly. Higgins was succeeded by Alfred Cowles, the WSBAD's first black Executive Director, in 1963. Cowles continued Higgins' aggressive and competent administration for his first few years, after which the Board resumed a lower profile.⁴¹

⁴⁰Ibid. Conversation with Seymour Kaplan, Director of Seattle ADL.

⁴¹MacDonald interview.

The WSBAD held its first hearing on a specific case in 1957, and the number of hearings increased for the next several years. The first "cease and desist" order issued by an administrative agency in a civil rights case was given to Tacoma's Alibi Tavern in 1958.⁴² In 1959, the Board used an open hearing for the first time as a means of inquiry rather than to settle a specific complaint. This hearing investigated discrimination by private clubs on public golf courses owned by the City of Seattle, discrimination which barred qualified minority golfers from most championship competition. The Board sent recommendations to the Seattle Park Board which in turn ordered private clubs to cease discrimination or lose their public course affiliation. The Park Board did not follow through, however, and the issue appeared again in 1961 in a formal complaint to the Board.⁴³ Despite the failure to find an immediate solution to the problem, the Board's "Report of Progress, 1959" concluded that "The public hearing has proved a valuable means of bringing the law to public attention, and of focusing public opinion in support of the law." The informal hearing was used increasingly in subsequent years for inquiry into discrimination in employment, public accommodations, and housing.

⁴² Seattle Post-Intelligencer, September 19, 1958.

⁴³ Seattle Post-Intelligencer, September 22, 1961.

Despite the WSBAD's improvements under the Rosellini appointees and the new Executive Directors, there remained economic and other problems of minority peoples which the state agency as constituted could not solve and some of which no state agency could solve. The law limited the actions of the Board and many of the problems were beyond the power of the law to change. Many of the problems demanded the attention and commitment of an entire population, and such recognition was never forthcoming. Statistics continued to show that minorities did not share equally in job opportunities, partly from continued discrimination and partly from lack of educational and other qualifications.⁴⁴

The style and tactics of civil rights advocacy changed in the early 1960s though the goals had not yet changed. Southern sit-ins and freedom bus rides had ushered in a period of non-violent protest which was aimed at dramatizing the racial injustice in American society and at reaching the conscience of America. Nationally, one of the leading groups that used the new style in civil rights was the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). CORE was founded on the principles of non-violent direct action during World War II and had been a small and obscure group until the 1960s. It

⁴⁴ See Calvin F. Schmid, Charles E. Nobbe, Arlene E. Mitchell, Nonwhite Races: State of Washington (Olympia, 1968), a statistical profile using 1960 Census data.

was a principal organizer of many of the major Southern protests and formed local affiliates around the country.⁴⁵

Seattle CORE, from its beginning in 1961, focused on black employment as its major concern. By 1964, it claimed to have opened several hundred jobs by methods ranging from "careful investigation and patient negotiation to dramatic direct action."⁴⁶ But the people of CORE realized that, despite gains it and other groups had made, equal opportunity in employment was far from being achieved. "Modest gains here and there are completely overshadowed by the city-wide pattern of discrimination and the economic dead weight of Negro unemployment, so productive of other social ills," the 1964 Drive for Equal Employment in Downtown Seattle (DEEDS) study declared. "In short, despite a very great expenditure of energy, effort, and goodwill, Seattle has had no breakthrough in jobs for Negroes."⁴⁷ At a CORE seminar in May 1964, "it was suggested that the frustrating failure to achieve a breakthrough in employment might be at least partly a result of dealing in piecemeal fashion with one employer at a time. . . . Finally the idea was proposed that CORE approach the

⁴⁵ See August Meier and Elliot Rudwick, CORE: A Study in the Civil Rights Movement 1942-1968 (New York, 1973).

⁴⁶ Charles A. Valentine, DEEDS Background and Basis: A Report on Research Leading to the Drive for Equal Employment in Downtown Seattle (Seattle, 1964), 1. University of Washington Library Northwest Collection.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.

whole economic and governmental complex of Seattle as a unit."⁴⁸ Thus began what historians August Meier and Elliot Rudwick have characterized as one of the two "most ambitious employment projects undertaken by CORE chapters."⁴⁹

The CORE Downtown project began with a researched study of the problem. The broad picture was supplied by governmental, business, and university reports. But deciding that the city lacked "enough well organized factual knowledge about itself so that the citizenry could think clearly about its racial problems,"⁵⁰ CORE supplemented this information with its own research in the summer of 1964 on black employment downtown, blacks as consumers, and the potential of black employment according to the labor needs of downtown business and the black labor force.

The CORE study found that black unemployment was at least double the rate of unemployment in the population as a whole, black incomes averaged twenty percent lower than white incomes, and menial jobs predominated in black employment. It found much token desegregation, which did not really open employment, and found much discrimination in advancement that was based on race rather than skill or training.⁵¹ CORE found

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Meier and Rudwick, CORE, 371.

⁵⁰ Valentine, DEEDS, 7.

⁵¹ Ibid., 2.

that Seattle's Central Area was a typical black ghetto: In addition to the demographic and socio-economic manifestations of the ghetto, the area was relatively poorly supplied with most types of retail outlets, many kinds of service establishments, restaurants, recreation, and "other normal community resources. Employment opportunities within the area are neither numerous nor especially desirable."⁵² The downtown area supplied the business and recreational services that the Central Area lacked, and, consequently, blacks patronized downtown in proportionately larger numbers than the general population. But downtown was not a major center of black employment. "Negroes, who make up five percent of the city's populace and at least five percent of downtown customers, hold less than three and one-half percent of all downtown jobs and even this small total is made up largely of less desirable and poorly paid positions."⁵³

CORE's survey of downtown employment discovered that blacks held little more than one percent of all positions above the menial level with private downtown employers. Retail establishments, which offered many reasonably dignified and well-paying jobs that did not need much specialized training, and which blacks most directly and substantially supported with spending, had only two percent black employees and half of these were menials. And the retail stores had been the one major target

⁵²Ibid., 19.

⁵³Ibid., 21.

of CORE and other groups' pressure in the preceding few years. The major employers, department stores, "remain part of the general discriminatory pattern" with only token difference from smaller stores.⁵⁴ The largest category of downtown employment was clerical and general office work. While the Census of 1960 found three percent of employees in this category to be black, the CORE survey found only 0.2 percent of the employees observable to the public to be black and one-third of these were janitors.⁵⁵ Banks, real estate firms, and finance companies, despite widely advertised tokenism, had only one percent black employees.⁵⁶ Over six percent of the employees of hotels, restaurants, and entertainment spots were black. But the eight percent of hotel workers who were black were all menials. Of over 2,000 employees in sixty-five restaurants there were no black managers, hostesses, cashiers, check girls, or waitresses but fourteen percent of the dishwashers and one hundred percent of the janitors were black.⁵⁷ State and local government employment patterns were as bad as the private. Only three percent of local government employees were black with a disproportionate number in menial positions. There were five blacks in the police department and two in the fire department. Although ten percent of the federal employees in Seattle

⁵⁴ Ibid., 23.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 24.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 25-26.

were black, this included many menials.⁵⁸

CORE determined that the downtown employers could substantially increase black employment in the area without dismissing any present employees. The Central Association, a businessman's organization, reported that four to five hundred new jobs had been created annually since 1956 and predicted even greater growth. The turnover of existing jobs in the area was estimated at five thousand per year.⁵⁹ According to Seattle Times business columnist Lane Smith, "nobody has disputed CORE's figures."⁶⁰ All that the employers needed to increase black employment was the will to do it; the opportunity was there. Comparing the federal government with other downtown employers, CORE determined that "the most important single distinction which sets the federal government apart in this respect is a clearcut policy that requires all agencies to create greater opportunities for minority employees."⁶¹ Other employers paid lip service to fair employment but had no firm policy to bring it about.

CORE was joined by many other groups in its Downtown project DEEDS, including the NAACP, the Urban League, the Catholic Interracial Council, the Baptist Ministers Alliance, the Methodist Episcopal Ministers Alliance, Unitarians for Social Justice, the University of Washington Civil

⁵⁸ Ibid., 27-31.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 40.

⁶⁰ Seattle Times, October 25, 1964.

⁶¹ Valentine, DEEDS, 37.

Rights Action Group, and the Ship Scalers Union, Local 541.⁶² Armed with the information it had gathered, DEEDS set to work in July 1964 negotiating with downtown business organizations and governmental and individual employers with the goal of twelve hundred new jobs for blacks in the area by early 1965.

In a letter to the Governor, the Mayor, the President of the City Council, the King County Commissioners, the Regional Director of the Civil Service Commission, the Chairman of the Central Association, and the Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce, CORE outlined its findings and presented the course it intended to follow. "Step two," its research completed,

negotiation with those who have the ability and therefore the responsibility to do away with discrimination, is initiated by this letter and will be carried forward by the meeting [called for in the opening paragraph]. The third step of appealing to the wider public for active support has also been started through consultations with other civil rights groups, church bodies, and civic organizations. . . . Plans for a fourth step of publicizing the entire situation through the mass media and otherwise are ready to be put into effect whenever necessary.

As in all CORE programs, the ultimate recourse of direct action in the form of demonstrations and other non-violent mass activities will not be invoked unless it is clear to us that negotiations are not producing a just solution to the problem. Nevertheless, careful plans have been prepared for direct action on a scale heretofore unprecedented in Seattle.

DEEDS broke down the jobs desired into categories and urged businessmen to recruit black employees and to publicize their efforts. DEEDS also

⁶² Ibid., 5.

asked employers to formulate explicit policies for training and upgrading black employees.⁶³

In the negotiations, the federal government accepted the DEEDS findings and promised to meet the DEEDS goals. Seattle Mayor J. D. Braman expressed the general intention to hire more blacks but refused to discuss the DEEDS goals. No other employer showed any cooperation.⁶⁴ A Jobs Fair promised early in the negotiations by the Chamber of Commerce and then postponed indefinitely, was finally held in January 1965. It was hailed as a success by the Seattle Times, with forty major business firms represented and attracting 2,500 to 3,000 people.⁶⁵ But a Chamber of Commerce mailer announcing the Fair explained that its purpose was to allow the firms to show what they do and what skills were necessary to employment. As far as offering any real employment or indicating that participating firms were committed to fair employment, the most optimistic thing the Chamber could say was that "A few might actually interview for existing openings."⁶⁶

⁶³ John H. Adams, Chairman, Central Seattle Coordinating Committee for Civil Rights, and Harold T. Martin, Chairman, Seattle CORE, to Albert D. Rosellini, et al., July 24, 1964. Seattle CORE Papers, University of Washington Library Manuscripts Collection, Box 6, Folder "Employment DEEDS Outgoing."

⁶⁴ Valentine, DEEDS, 46-47.

⁶⁵ Seattle Times, January 29, 1965.

⁶⁶ Seattle CORE Papers, Box 6, Folder "Employment Incoming."

CORE voted for direct action to bring pressure on downtown business after repeated rebuffs and stalling by organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce. A general boycott of the downtown area commenced October 19, 1964. This was paralleled by an appeal to the wider public through leafletting downtown shoppers, a downtown demonstration march, and neighborhood meetings to gain support for the boycott.⁶⁷

The CORE boycott was apparently a success because downtown employers began to make small moves towards fairer employment practices towards minorities. A CORE mailer in December 1964 claimed that downtown sales had declined and claimed the boycott was a significant factor.⁶⁸ The phrase "equal opportunity employer" began to appear more frequently in newspaper want ads in 1964, though selectively. A & P stores, which had been singled out by CORE for a nation-wide campaign for fair employment, began to include the label "Equal Opportunity Employer" in its regular advertising. The daily newspapers paid scattered attention to the boycott, especially when it failed to get backing from several unnamed civil rights leaders and groups.⁶⁹ The only group identified as opposing the boycott was the Catholic Interracial Council.⁷⁰ The boycott lasted

⁶⁷ Ibid., Box 6, Folder "Employment Ephemera."

⁶⁸ Ibid., Box 6, Folder "Employment-DEEDS Outgoing."

⁶⁹ Seattle Times, October 25, 1964.

⁷⁰ Updated clippings, Seattle CORE Papers, Box 6, Folder "Employment-DEEDS Clippings."

from October 1964 to mid-January 1965, when CORE decided to concentrate once again on individual targets, and was responsible for opening very few jobs directly.⁷¹

The minority employment picture in Washington has significantly improved in recent years as more people have become aware of the problem. The black protest movement, the involvement of the federal government, and new federal law have become major factors in shaping patterns of employment. Black employees are now highly visible to the public in most kinds of businesses in the metropolitan areas of the state, and the city of Seattle has developed a large black middle class population of professionals and white collar workers. Large numbers of black salesmen and women are in evidence in downtown Seattle's major retail stores. Minority blue collar workers found improved employment opportunities in many industries by the early 1960s. A 1960-1961 Urban League industrial survey found that fourteen of forty-seven large Seattle industries employed numbers of blacks equal to or in excess of their proportion in the total population. These included Boeing Company, the largest employer in the area. Ten of the forty-seven had token minority employment and twenty-four had none, leaving much room for improvement.⁷²

⁷¹Seattle Times, January 13, 1965.

⁷²"Supplementary Industrial Survey Report," October 26, 1962. Urban League Papers, I-II, 15-13.

Major problem areas of employment still remain. Discrimination has endured in the higher levels of business, industry, and government and, more importantly for most blacks, in some large areas of employment in skilled trades which are controlled by discriminatory unions. The building trades, the best example of the latter, have been the focus of anti-discriminatory activity in recent years in the Seattle area by the United Construction Workers, a group organized specifically for this purpose.

The 1970 Census verifies that the percentage of minority unemployment, especially black and Spanish-speaking, remains disproportionately large relative to whites.⁷³ The reasons for the ongoing disproportion of minority unemployment are partly traceable to the large numbers of minority people who belong to the hard-core unemployed, those who lack skills, education, and are physically, mentally, or socially handicapped.⁷⁴ The programs for bettering employment opportunities discussed in this chapter have barely touched this large and troublesome presence in the work force, concentrating their efforts on the relatively few who qualify for getting ahead on the broader society's terms. The one program of

⁷³U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1970: Census of the Population, Detailed Characteristics. Final Report PC (1) - D49 Washington. "Employment Status by Race, Sex, and Age: 1970," Table 164, 441-448.

⁷⁴See Kenneth B. Clark, Dark Ghetto (New York, 1965) for a discussion of the complex factors which create so many unemployable minority people.

note that did concentrate its efforts on the hard-core unemployed in the Seattle area was the grass-roots Central Area Motivation Program (CAMP) which was formed in response to the creation of the Office of Economic Opportunity. In the mid-1960s, the black community was able, through CAMP, to use federal government funds to locate and put to work some of the hard-core unemployed. Unfortunately, the end of the War on Poverty halted this unique community-based operation before it had begun to scratch the surface.⁷⁵ The unemployable minority person remains as one of the principal road-blocks to a racially integrated economy.

⁷⁵ Conversation with Frank Waynewood, former CAMP worker, February 1974.

CHAPTER SIX

THE CHALLENGE TO HOUSING DISCRIMINATION IN SEATTLE, 1944-1964

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, the early years of the Civic Unity Committee, Committee members were fond of calling Seattle "America's Most Democratic City." Most Seattleites, even the well-informed, saw their own city as being somehow different from the other cities of the nation, free from insurmountable problems caused by racial discrimination. These were optimistic years in the field of "race relations" as slow progress seemed to be made. And progress was made on many fronts. In the area of housing, however, the problem of segregation grew progressively worse as Seattle's black population increased at a phenomenal rate and was concentrated in the Central Area. In this respect, Seattle was all too typical of other Northern and Western cities. As Gunnar Myrdal observed, residential segregation in the North has been the basis of institutional segregation and has, therefore, aroused the greatest resistance when challenged.¹ This chapter will explore Seattle's challenge to housing discrimination, focusing especially on the activities of the Civic Unity Committee.

¹Gunnar Myrdal, An American Dilemma (New York, 1944), 618.

As in other large cities outside the South, Seattle's nonwhite neighborhoods were born long before great numbers of minority people migrated there.² The nucleus of Seattle's black community is a plot of land at Twenty-third and Madison that was taken by William Gross, a highly successful black hotel owner and realtor, about 1890, in payment of a debt. Gross built his home on the land and sold parcels to other black families. The other center of black population was on Jackson Street where transient laborers lived. The black community radiated from these points as it grew. Initially, the pattern of racial concentration was largely a matter of choice, but it was a choice restricted by the whites' inhospitable attitudes.³ The small but noticeable influx of blacks from the South during World War I brought increased discrimination and strengthened informal barriers around the racially-mixed neighborhoods where most of the city's minorities lived.⁴ Chinese and Japanese communities were adjacent to the blacks. But through the 1940s and even the 1950s, the neighborhoods in the Central Area were racially balanced.⁵

²See Allan H. Spear, Black Chicago: The Making of a Negro Ghetto (Chicago, 1967) and Gilbert Osofsky, Harlem: The Making of a Ghetto for excellent historical discussions of ghetto formation.

³L. K. Northwood and Ernest A. T. Barth, Urban Desegregation: Negro Pioneers and Their White Neighbors (Seattle, 1965), 5.

⁴Horace R. Cayton, Jr., Long Old Road (Seattle, 1963), 21-23.

⁵Calvin F. Schmid and Wayne W. McVey, Growth and Distribution of Minority Races in Seattle, Washington (Seattle, 1964).

Large scale migration of blacks to Seattle began with World War II. From a 1940 total of 3,789, the black population grew to 15,666 in 1950, 26,901 in 1960, and by 1970 it was 37,868.⁶ The results of this phenomenal growth were a strain on the housing market and a heightening of racial tensions and discrimination. Concentration of blacks in the Central Area increased and other areas of the city erected more formidable barriers to keep the blacks out. Restrictive covenants, even after they were made unenforceable by the 1948 Shelley v. Kraemer Supreme Court decision, flourished and served as signs of unwelcome to minorities. Realtors, who controlled the bulk of housing sales, refused to show homes to minorities in many areas and actually profited from the shortage of housing for nonwhites by charging inflated prices in the ghetto. Furthermore, they were professionally committed to racial discrimination until 1950. "A realtor," read Article 34 of the National Real Estate Board's Code of Ethics, "should never be instrumental in introducing into a neighborhood a character of property or occupancy, members of any race or nationality or any individual whose presence will clearly be detrimental to property values in that neighborhood." Though the direct reference to race and nationality was deleted from Article 34 in 1950, the intent and effect of the Code was no less discriminatory.⁷ In 1950, 69 percent of

⁶Ibid., and U. S. Census of the Population, 1970.

⁷"History of the Civic Unity Committee, 1944-1952." CUC I, 1-1.

Seattle's blacks lived within ten of the city's 118 census tracts in the center of the city; by 1960, 78 percent lived in the same ten tracts. The familiar pattern of poor quality housing, overcrowding, poor health, de facto school segregation, and rising crime rates that accompanies ghetto formation in all of the nation's large cities was also in evidence in Seattle.⁸

The Seattle Civic Unity Committee recognized, from its inception in 1944, that housing was a major cause of racial tensions.⁹ Once the Washington State Board Against Discrimination in Employment was created in 1949, the CUC saw the housing problem as its most important concern and the key to accomplishing its mission of racial peace in Seattle. "The Committee," stated a 1952 history of the CUC, "recognizes that discrimination in housing is the major problem and believes that if this problem could be solved the other problems would automatically be eliminated."¹⁰

The CUC utilized several methods in dealing with housing discrimination. One function of the Committee was to respond to individual complaints of discrimination. Usually a Board member would talk with the reluctant seller of a house or with protesting neighbors and attempt to ease the integration process. The Committee's goal was not to force a minority family on a neighborhood but to make the new family an accepted and

⁸"The Housing Situation of Minority Groups in the State of Washington, 1961." CUC I, 8-3.

⁹CUC Minutes, March 23, 1944. Mander Papers, 45-1.

¹⁰"History of the CUC."

welcomed part of the community. This approach met with mixed success. In an early case, in 1951 the CUC successfully facilitated a Japanese couple's acceptance in the University District.¹¹ The most noteworthy individual case the CUC worked on, concerning a Jew fighting the restrictive covenant in the Sand Point area, led the Board to employ a second method, educating the community. In this 1952-1953 case the Committee waged a long campaign to try to persuade the community to revoke its unenforceable restrictive covenant on its own, for reasons of justice and American ideals, without pressures from activist groups or sensational press coverage. It organized a study of community attitudes towards minorities made by University of Washington students and attempted to create a more favorable attitude toward breaking down the restrictive covenant through the churches. The effort failed, principally because of the resistance of the Sand Point leaders headed by Daniel Boone Allison. The CUC also incurred the anger of the Anti-Defamation League which had referred the case, the American Jewish Committee, and the Seattle Urban League whose spokesmen had desired to expose the Sand Point community's discrimination in the press.¹²

A third method of combating housing discrimination, and potentially the most effective, was the initiation of a grass roots study group to deal

¹¹CUC Minutes, April 6, 1951. CUC I, 22-20.

¹²"Housing Discrimination-Sand Point." CUC I, 13-(1-5). See also ADL Files, Folder: "Discrimination-Housing-Sand Point Area."

with localized neighborhood problems. In 1954, the CUC chose a broadly conceived "Central Area," one that went far beyond the borders of the black community, for its grass roots program because it was the area experiencing the greatest population changes. The interracial Central Seattle Community Association focused most of its attention on residential segregation and on transitional neighborhoods on the borders of the black ghetto.¹³

Madrona-Denny Blaine, one such transitional neighborhood, provides a good example of the Association in action. In 1955, the leadership of the Madrona-Denny Blaine Community Council, under its president Leslie H. Dills, attempted to use the usual scare tactics of threatened property values and crime to consolidate this old residential area against black "infiltration."¹⁴ Members of the Central Seattle Community Association living in the neighborhood countered Dills' call for restrictions against blacks with their own views about integration at the October 1955 meeting of the Community Club. The Club voted to disavow Dills' statement and to endorse the work of the Civic Unity Committee.¹⁵ During the next several months, the Madrona-Denny Blaine area was divided into two camps over the issue of integration. The old residents of the neighborhood,

¹³Central Seattle Community Association. CUC I, Boxes 10 and 11.

¹⁴Madrona-Denny Blaine Community Club "Bulletin," October 1955. CUC I, 15-4.

¹⁵CUC Minutes, October 7, 1955. CUC I, 22-25.

out of fear of falling property values, crime, and school problems, resisted the efforts of the newer and younger residents to create a permanently integrated neighborhood. The effort to change the Club's bylaws to admit nonwhites was defeated in February 1956.¹⁶

The Civic Unity Committee, though it had been instrumental in the challenge to Dills' call for restrictions, now attempted to mediate between the two groups to lessen tensions. "Our Board of Trustees," CUC president Paul Green wrote to Dills, "is made up of conservative but forthright business and professional residents of Seattle whose approach to human relations is objective and firmly based on the facts in situations brought to their attention. Our concern is for the community as a whole—not for any one majority or minority group. . . . We too are concerned about the changes taking place in the central part of the city."¹⁷ The CUC considered the new residents to be too aggressive in their determination to open up the neighborhood and counselled moderation and education. The Committee arranged for a University of Washington study to determine the effect of minorities on property values, to be coordinated by a CUC member, University sociologist Ernest A. T. Barth. The CUC tried to encourage better communication between the old and new residents of Madrona-Denny Blaine.¹⁸

¹⁶CUC Minutes, April 5, 1956. CUC I, 22-27.

¹⁷Green to Dills, October 26, 1955. CUC I, 15-4.

¹⁸CUC Minutes, April 5, 1956.

The neighborhood remained divided over the issue of integration for a number of years. In June 1956, Leslie Dills attempted to buy out a black family that had bought a home in the area. "The neighbors won't stand for this," Dills was quoted as saying by the black woman involved. "We want to buy you people out."¹⁹ Over the next several years many black families moved into the area and many white residents were determined to remain and live in an integrated neighborhood. The Civic Unity Committee and the Central Seattle Community Association helped white families to avoid the kind of panic selling which did lead to temporary losses in property values in other neighborhoods by providing information about integrated communities in other cities. Today, long after the demise of the CUC and the Central Seattle Community Association, an integrated community 36 percent black exists in the Madrona district east of 34th Avenue East, on the edge of the city's black ghetto. This neighborhood recently served as one of three examples of successful and profitable integrated living in the popular national magazine Money. The Money article, "It Pays to Stay When Blacks Move In," focused on the documented fact that property values in racially integrated neighborhoods increase at least as fast as in comparable all-white areas. In Seattle from 1968 to

¹⁹CUC Minutes, June 7, 1957. CUC I, 22-30.

July 1973, Madrona property appreciated 7 percent compared to the almost exclusively white neighborhood Laurelhurst's 2.5 percent.²⁰

One of the more important achievements of the Central Seattle Community Association was the generation of the ideas behind the Greater Seattle Housing Council, which the Civic Unity Committee brought to fruition. The Association's Housing Committee reported that the community's main housing problems of blight and overcrowding existed within the almost segregated black neighborhoods and could only be solved by a city-wide approach.²¹ At the Association's suggestion, the CUC planned and convened a Housing Conference in April 1955. In attendance representing the housing industry were officers of the Seattle Master Builders Association, the Seattle Mortgage Bankers Association, the American Institute of Architects, the Seattle Real Estate Board, and the Apartment Operators Association. Two of the public agencies represented were the Seattle Housing Authority and the Seattle Public Schools. All of the private intergroup and civil rights agencies attended.

The April 1955 Housing Conference was Civic Unity action at its best. It brought together opposing interests and ideas for the first time, revealed to both sides how far apart they were, and hopefully opened the

²⁰ Avery Comarow, "It Pays to Stay When Blacks Move In," Money 2 (November 1973), 62-66.

²¹ "Report of the Housing Committee," Central Seattle Community Association, March 3, 1955. ADL Files, Folder: "Housing in Seattle."

way to compromise and cooperation. Leonard Schroeter of the Anti-Defamation League provided an insightful outsider's view of the Conference which is also valuable to an understanding of the more liberal civil rights groups' position.

I think that the workshop which took place was, by and large, a healthy experience. Certainly the fact that important segments of the housing industry were present in large numbers made it a somewhat different type of experience than we are accustomed to. Certainly too, the fact that it was sponsored by the Civic Unity Committee which is a Community Chest agency, made it possible to involve housing people more easily than otherwise might have been the case. . . .

There is no question but that the people in the housing industry now have a better understanding of the grievances and desires of members of the minority community. . . . Some of the things that were said were somewhat of a shock to the housing people who, prior to this conference, had very little idea of what the real grievances of minority groups in the community were. . . .

The conference made it clear to both minority groups and to the industry representatives that there was a great gap in the thinking between the two groups and that we were a long way from having even a minimal common basis for agreement. This I think has value since it makes explicit how much distance we have to travel before we can [have] equal opportunity in housing in this community.²²

The CUC and the more liberal agencies such as the ADL, the NAACP, and the Urban League clashed over the make-up of a proposed permanent city-wide housing council which would carry on the work of the Conference. While the CUC desired to include the industries represented at the Conference, the other agencies opposed this. "I would personally oppose such

²²Schroeter to Alex Miller, April 27, 1955. ADL Files, "Housing in Seattle."

a housing council at this time if it included industry representatives," Schroeter wrote after the Conference, "because we are so far apart yet in our attitude that we wouldn't agree, even on the most minimal things." He felt that dialogue with the industry was good, but that it should not take place within a Housing Council.²³

The Greater Seattle Housing Council was formed in February 1956 on Civic Unity Committee terms. From the beginning, the Council was dominated by the CUC which supplied its staff service, office space, and its philosophy. With a membership representing "all points of view," it was essentially a vehicle for dialogue between the opponents in Seattle's housing controversy, the intergroup agencies which strongly backed open housing and the housing industry which opposed it.²⁴ The Council won the editorial praise of the Seattle Times.²⁵ It subsidized research projects in coordination with the University of Washington, held annual conferences, and ran a speakers' bureau, but the basic division among its member agencies prevented it from advocating fair housing unequivocally and from being an effective educative force in the community.

One project that never got past the discussion stage in the Council was a service to compile a list of people willing to sell their homes to

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ "Fact Sheet on Greater Seattle Housing Council, July 1959." CUC I, 14-2.

²⁵ April 17, 1956.

minority people. Realtors' opposition to such a service was for obvious reasons and they were able to block the creation of a GSHC service. In 1962, the Fair Housing Listing Service was created by twenty-four organizations including the NAACP, the Urban League, CORE, the ADL, Christian Friends for Racial Equality, church groups, Harmony Homes, Inc., and several private persons. The CUC did not participate as a group but some of its individual members did. At its peak in 1964, the Service listed about two hundred fifty homes ranging in price from \$10,000 to \$50,000 and was the largest such service in the West. The Service accounted for contacts resulting in \$1,000,000 worth of sales from forty-six transactions in its first two years.²⁶ The driving force behind the Service was Sidney Gerber, creator of Harmony Homes which built homes in all-white areas and sold them to minority families. When Gerber was killed in 1965, his wife took over the Service.

The Greater Seattle Housing Council held together until the major controversy surrounding the fair housing ordinance in the summer of 1963 moved the Urban League and the NAACP to resign. "Our affiliation with the Council," read the Urban League letter of resignation, "has not been

²⁶ Harmony Homes Newsletter, March 1, 1964. CORE Papers, Box 9, Folder: "Housing Incoming." Sidney Gerber built fifteen homes for minorities in previously all-white neighborhoods. Only one real estate broker would list Harmony Homes, and the Seattle Times refused to run its ads. Argus, May 10, 1963.

productive in bettering housing opportunities for minority persons. Therefore, we feel that our relationship has been one with a growing sense of frustration and futility."²⁷ The NAACP was characteristically more outspoken. "We feel that your program of gradualism is incompatible with the aims and aspirations of the minority groups of Seattle in both time and substance," Dr. Earl V. Miller of the NAACP wrote to the Greater Seattle Housing Council.²⁸ This action confused the other members of the Council. One member stated that

It is this very fact of diversity in point of view that is objectionable to some people who feel that the purpose of a joint housing group such as the Greater Seattle Housing Council should be open housing for all people "period" with no time or energy wasted on informing or educating or seeking cooperation from among those who do not agree on method or approach.²⁹

"The loss of the NAACP and the Urban League has really had no effect except public relations wise," CUC Executive Secretary Louise Blackham wrote to CUC President John Gordon in the spring of 1964, just after the failure of an open housing ordinance to win the approval of the voters of the city. "Neither contributed help nor ever understood the purposes [of the Council]."³⁰

²⁷"Activities Report, March 1, 1963 - August 31, 1963." CUC I, 8-3.

²⁸Dr. Miller, Seattle NAACP Housing Committee Chairman, to Joseph Martineau, President of the Greater Seattle Housing Council, July 30, 1963. Urban League Papers, I-II, 5-6.

²⁹Minutes of the Greater Seattle Housing Council, July 17, 1963. CUC I, 8-4.

³⁰Louise Blackham to John Gordon, March 26, 1964. CUC I, 8-4.

This small controversy is instructive. "Public relations" was the very essence of the CUC's attempt to unify the city and was the key to passing the open housing ordinance. The CUC, while sincerely in favor of fair housing, was willing to allow its actions to be diluted within the body that it had almost single-handedly created for the purpose of promoting open housing. At best, this approach was a cautious attempt to change the minds of member groups such as the Seattle Real Estate Board. At worst, it was a sterile exercise that put off a meaningful drive for open housing for over six years. The blacks' "growing sense of frustration and futility" is understandable.

All efforts by private citizens and independent agencies to improve the minority housing situation proved inadequate to the task of reversing the ghettoization of the Central Area. Some neighborhoods were integrated by middle class blacks, a slow beginning which was probably the best that could be done. Realtors were uncooperative, whites in general were apathetic and failed to recognize the problem, and blacks were reluctant to exercise their constitutional rights by moving to where they were not wanted, even if they could find a suitable home.

The first local³¹ legislative action in minority housing was the passage of the Omnibus Civil Rights Act of 1957 which made it unlawful to

³¹ Federal action, such as President Kennedy's Executive Order 11063 in November 1962, did not have much impact on Seattle. The Seattle Housing Authority which operates federally owned and built housing, unlike a great majority of other local housing authorities around the nation, never discriminated against minorities.

discriminate in "publicly assisted" housing.³² The law enlarged the scope of the Washington State Board Against Discrimination. However, the legislature did not comparably increase the powers of the Board to enforce the law. The Board continued working on a case-by-case basis, using persuasion when possible and bringing court action as a last resort. It held one information hearing with the Seattle Apartment Operators Association, at the Operators' request, to discuss policies for the rental of permanent and transient housing to World's Fair visitors. At the May 1961 meeting, the Board turned down the Apartment Operators' request for a relaxing of enforcement of the law against discrimination and reaffirmed the necessity of equal opportunity in housing.³³ But realtors easily circumvented the law by subtly discouraging black clients. Before 1957 blatant discourtesy was good enough.³⁴ By dealing with individuals instead of the real estate industry as a whole, the Board was doomed to failure.

The state fair housing law was successfully challenged in O'Meara v Washington State Board Against Discrimination. Judge Hodson of the Superior Court of King County, in an opinion which two constitutional

³² Revised Code of Washington 49.60.217.

³³ WSBAD, "1961 Annual Report."

³⁴ "A Survey of Racial Attitudes of a Select Sample of Real Estate Firms in Seattle," February 1, 1958. Urban League Papers, I-II, Box 13.

law experts found to be illogical and in error,³⁵ declared that, while

fully cognizant of the evils which flow from discrimination because of race, creed, or color in a free democratic society, . . . [and that the] practice of discrimination is utterly inconsistent with the political philosophy upon which our institutions are based, . . . [the court rules for] the right of the owner of private property to complete freedom of choice in selecting those with whom he will deal.³⁶

The Washington State Supreme Court in 1961 and the United States Supreme Court in 1962 upheld the decision, though on different grounds.³⁷

The overturning of this ineffective law apparently set off the systematic campaign for a city ordinance to fill the void. As long as the law was on the books, no matter how little it accomplished, many of the people of Washington who cared about fair housing were satisfied that something was being done. The Supreme Court's 1962 decision sparked a flurry of activity.

Influenced by the pleas of many groups and individuals, including the Civic Unity Committee which had been calling for such action for years, Mayor Gordon S. Clinton initiated official action by asking the City Council for a Citizens' Advisory Committee on Minority Housing in July 1962. The mayor privately told CUC President Archie Katz that he had asked for a study group to avoid having a program for open housing "scuttled right

³⁵ Arval A. Morris and Donald B. Ritter, "Racial Minority Housing in Washington," Washington Law Review 37 (Summer, 1962), 142-142.

³⁶ O'Meara v. Washington State Board Against Discrimination, No. 535996, Superior Court of King County, July 31, 1959.

³⁷ See Morris and Ritter, "Racial Minority Housing," 142-146, for the complex legal arguments.

off because neither the City Council nor the public in general has been fully prepared."³⁸ The fifteen-man Committee was headed by ex-CUC president and Seattle attorney Alfred J. Westberg and, with black, Japanese, Chinese, and Filipino members, was representative of a cross-section of Seattle's population. It was not, however, representative of the blacks who had done the most in the area of housing—the one black member was a policeman and was resented by local black leaders. It also had four representatives of real estate interests, an unusual representation in view of past performances on the part of that industry. Black leaders and some of their white allies vigorously protested the Committee's composition. "If it was your desire to have a 'safe committee,' Reverend Samuel McKinney wrote to the mayor, 'then that aim has been satisfied unless something most unusual occurs.'"³⁹

The Report of the Citizen's Advisory Committee was delivered to Clinton in December 1962, a hastily but well prepared study that was hailed by all friends of open housing. "Something most unusual" had occurred, the protesters had to eat their words, and the mayor got more than he was prepared to accept. "Your committee," read the Majority Report signed by eleven of the fifteen members,

³⁸ Notes of Clinton's meeting with Archie Katz, June 18, 1962. Gordon S. Clinton Papers, University of Washington Library Manuscript Collection, Box 30, Folder: "Minority Housing."

³⁹ Samuel McKinney to Clinton, July 27, 1962. Clinton Papers, 30, "Minority Housing."

has concluded that a city ordinance prohibiting discrimination in the sale or rental of housing accommodations on the basis of race, creed, color or national origin is an essential tool for the work of a city commission on human relations. Almost all organizations and individuals operating in the race relations field from which the committee heard either in writing, or at the hearing, vigorously urged passage of such an ordinance. Only the Seattle Real Estate Board and the Apartment Operators Association of Seattle opposed it at the hearing.⁴⁰

The Minority Report, signed by the four representatives of the real estate industry, questioned the wisdom of and the need for an ordinance.⁴¹

When Clinton went before the City Council on December 24, 1962, he presented the findings of the Westberg Committee but recommended that the proposed open housing ordinance "await several months' experience" by the Human Rights Commission and municipal listing agency that he proposed at the suggestion of the Report.⁴² In effect, he had accepted the Minority Report. The mayor escaped the wrath of disappointed backers of an ordinance at this time because the City Council ignored most of his proposals, voting only to send a letter to the State legislature supporting a newly drafted state fair housing law and to prepare a measure setting up a listing service.⁴³ The City Council thus ducked the issue.

⁴⁰ Report of the Citizens' Advisory Committee on Minority Housing, Alfred J. Westberg, Chairman, December 1962, 9. Copies in CUC Papers and Clinton Papers.

⁴¹ Ibid., 12.

⁴² Mayor's Report to the City Council, December 24, 1962. Clinton Papers, 30-"Minority Housing."

⁴³ Seattle Times, January 15, 1963.

When the State bill failed to pass, Mayor Clinton once again asked the Council for a Human Rights Commission without an ordinance in May 1963. Now he was deluged with letters, some congratulating him on his action and urging him to include an ordinance, others bitterly attacking the omission. President George Neff Stevens of the Urban League charged that Clinton had accepted the minority report. He attacked the mayor's idea that a Human Rights Commission should be a research tool to determine the scope of the problem and to find solutions. "In our opinion," Stevens wrote City Council President Floyd Miller, "this aspect of the matter has been researched to death. The suggestion that further delving and probing is required before action can be taken is simply to generate further frustration in an already tense situation."⁴⁴ City Councilman Wing Luke, with insight into an inherent problem with study groups, warned Clinton that a powerless Human Rights Commission "could delude the public into believing that something concrete had been done about the problem." He argued that the law itself would be the best tool for educating the public.⁴⁵

The city's black leadership decided that the situation called for dramatic action. What may have been Seattle's first civil rights sit-in was staged in the mayor's office on July 1, 1963, the day the City Council

⁴⁴Stevens to Miller, June 3, 1963. Urban League Papers I-II, 13-7.

⁴⁵Wing Luke to Clinton, June 11, 1963. Clinton Papers, 36-
"Human Rights."

began hearings on Clinton's proposals, by an interracial group called the Central District Youth Club under the leadership of Reverends Mance Jackson and Samuel McKinney.⁴⁶ Clinton was critical of the sit-in. "Nothing will be gained by this type of demonstration. In fact, it will set back their cause."⁴⁷

In fact, the cause of fair housing took a step forward the following day when the City Council, sufficiently impressed by a combination of the reasonableness of the proponents' arguments and the sense of urgency demonstrated by the sit-in, accepted a compromise suggested by the Civic Unity Committee.⁴⁸ The Council agreed to authorize a Human Rights Commission whose first duty would be to draft an open housing ordinance within thirty days of its appointment. By a parliamentary maneuver, Wing Luke was able to put the Council on record that it would pass such an ordinance.⁴⁹

The Human Rights Commission was formally authorized on July 15 and the mayor nominated Philip Hayasaka, a Japanese-American, for

⁴⁶ The summer of 1963 was a time of massive civil rights activity all over the nation, climaxing in the March on Washington in August. The Times and P. I. each devoted at least one page per day to sensational coverage of black civil disobedience and demands.

⁴⁷ Seattle Times, July 2, 1963.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Argus, July 19, 1963.

Executive Secretary and twelve prominent citizens, including two blacks, for one- to three-years terms. Westberg, whose Advisory Committee had done such an excellent job, was again named Chairman. The white-dominated intergroup agencies hailed the nominations; Jack Gordon of the CUC commended the mayor and pledged to work with the Commission.⁵⁰ Black leaders, however, were indignant over the choice of appointees, especially of a Japanese-American instead of a black as Executive Secretary. "We feel that in his recommendations the mayor has closed his channel of communication with the Negro community," Reverend Jackson declared, "and that his action shows he is not willing to let the Negro take an active part in reaching solutions to inequality."⁵¹

The mayor's nominations once again severely divided proponents of open housing. Blacks protested what they considered inadequate representation with a march and rally on July 20 and sit-ins at the City Council during the Council's deliberation of the nominations. A small incident in which a protester tripped one of the councilmen led to the arrest of twenty-three demonstrators on July 25 and front-page news coverage.⁵² Councilman Wing Luke and A. Ludlow Kramer opposed the arrests, but Council President Floyd Miller was adamant in his demand

⁵⁰ Seattle Times, July 22, 1963.

⁵¹ Seattle Post-Intelligencer, July 20, 1963.

⁵² Seattle Times, July 26, 1963 and P.I. July 26, 1963.

for them. Black leaders expressed regret for the "violence" but called it indicative of the mood of the black community. "A paternalistic concept of human relations in this country is all over," Jackson stated. "We haven't been able to communicate that. We don't need to be taken care of. We want to be equal participants in our own problem-solving processes." White sympathizers were convinced that the demonstrations had damaged the cause of civil rights. "It is our view," a Times editorial added, "that Mayor Clinton and the City Council acted in the best interest of the Negro community in the make-up of the commission. . . ." ⁵³

The split between advocates of open housing went deeper. City councilmen favoring an ordinance, especially Wing Luke and A. Ludlow Kramer, made public their belief that a moderate law would have the best chance of passing the unavoidable referendum to the citizens. The real opponents of the ordinance, working on the same premise, backed a strong bill. Black leaders supported the strong version and were critical of their allies on the City Council. ⁵⁴ Luke and Kramer, representing the sentiment of the CUC and what must have been the majority of white proponents of open housing, were obviously motivated by the desire to get something on the books that would at least be a beginning. In retrospect one black claimed he was more concerned with the principle involved and that he had

⁵³ Seattle Times, July 26, 1963.

⁵⁴ Argus, July 26, 1963.

doubted that even a weak bill would survive a referendum.⁵⁵ Reverend McKinney, who served on the first Human Rights Commission, recently stated: "We really should not have had to vote on our constitutional right in the first place. . . . When there is a moral issue there is no compromise."⁵⁶

Once the Human Rights Commission had begun its work, differences were buried and open housing proponents were reunited.⁵⁷ The Commission drafted a strong ordinance that would make discrimination in any kind of housing a misdemeanor punishable by a fine and/or a jail sentence. It provided for the Human Rights Commission to use friendly persuasion whenever possible with court action as a last resort. The Commissioners felt that if any compromising was to be done, it was up to the elected representatives of the people to do it.⁵⁸ They submitted the draft on August 28, 1963, coinciding with the March on Washington.

The next phase of the campaign centered on the key issue of whether or not the City Council would pass any ordinance, weak or strong,

⁵⁵ Interview with Gary Gayton, April 8, 1971. University of Washington Library Manuscripts Collection.

⁵⁶ Interview with Reverend Samuel McKinney, April 7, 1971. University of Washington Library Manuscripts Collection.

⁵⁷ The Seattle Times of July 27, 1963 reported an amicable meeting between black leaders and the Human Rights Commission.

⁵⁸ Interview with Alfred J. Westberg, April 8, 1971. University of Washington Library Manuscripts Collection.

with an "emergency clause" that would put the law into effect before a referendum. Chairman Westberg defended the Commission's recommendation of the emergency clause: "The denial of freedom over a period of years doesn't make it any less an emergency when it comes time to get ride of discrimination."⁵⁹ Mayor Clinton, who was not running for reelection in 1964, told the League of Women Voters that the proposed ordinance should be made effective "immediately [by means of the emergency clause] and by mobilizing the entire community on 'Project Understanding,' the people of Seattle will have the opportunity to see the ordinance in operation before voting upon it."⁶⁰ The Citizens' Committee for Open Housing formed in October 1963, by Westberg's initiative, to educate the public.⁶¹

At the City Council's open hearing on October 25, 1963, the emergency clause continued to be the central issue, though others did arise. One side issue was raised by Reverend Thomas W. Miller of the Bible Presbyterian Church who told the Council that the Bible directs Christians to discriminate on religious grounds. Councilman Luke asked him, "Can you tell me what part of the Bible contains the reference,

⁵⁹ Seattle Times, October 2, 1963.

⁶⁰ Clinton Address to League of Women Voters, September 18, 1963. Clinton Papers, 36-"Human Rights."

⁶¹ Westberg to George Neff Stevens, September 25, 1963. Urban League Papers I-II, 13-7.

'Love thy neighbor as they self' ? " Miller could not, and throughout the day Luke interrupted the hearings as people brought him references from Leviticus, Mark, Matthew, and, appropriately, Luke. The Council decided to leave it up to the voters whether or not they wanted their neighbor to be black, with Wing Luke and Charles M. Carroll dissenting.⁶² J. D. Braman attacked the ministers who had appealed to his conscience, declaring that his conscience was his own affair, not theirs. He said the people should decide, not the Council. (Braman's use of the emergency clause on financial matters was well known.)⁶³

The other large issue was the strength of the law. President Gordon of the CUC, talking during the time allotted the proponents despite the objection of Chairman Kenneth Coleman of the Citizens' Committee for Open Housing, argued that the law needed to be modified, specifically asking that the jail sentence be removed. The black leaders continued to argue for a law with teeth in it.⁶⁴ The bill that emerged lacked a jail sentence but was intact in most other aspects.⁶⁵

The campaign for fair housing now became an educational effort, guided by the Citizen's Committee with the aid of interested groups. The

⁶²Seattle P. I., October 26, 1963.

⁶³Argus, November 4, 1963.

⁶⁴Seattle P. I., October 26, 1963.

⁶⁵The newspaper accounts are unclear about this aspect of the debate. It is not possible to determine the stand of individual councilmen.

Civic Unity Committee as a group and its individual members as private citizens played prominent roles in this campaign. Once the decision about what kind of law was to be voted on was made, the CUC supported it wholeheartedly. Some CUC members were afraid that the Committee had lost influence because of its position at the hearing.⁶⁶ The well organized campaign included radio and television coverage, community meetings, coffee hours, widespread church support, and a march of about one thousand people on the Saturday before the election. The people running the campaign thought that they were doing a good job of educating the public and exploding myths about falling property values.⁶⁷ The leaders of the unified effort expressed confidence in victory, though they predicted a close contest at the polls.⁶⁸

The opposition held its fire until the last week of the campaign.⁶⁹ Organized and financed by the real estate interests, the opposition campaign played on the economic and social fears of whites. Realtors claimed that the need for an ordinance had not been demonstrated, that the law would afford minorities special privileges, that it tampered with the rights of private property, and that it would lead to a police state.⁷⁰ Their

⁶⁶CUC Minutes, November 1, 1963. CUC I, 23-13.

⁶⁷Westberg interview.

⁶⁸Seattle Times, March 9, 1964.

⁶⁹Seattle Times, March 1, 1964.

⁷⁰Ibid.

advertising appealed to the emotions. An example cried "YOUR RIGHTS ARE AT STAKE! Would you like a CRIMINAL RECORD because you sold your home or rented your apartment to a person of your choice?"⁷¹

J. D. Braman, now candidate for mayor, opposed the ordinance while his opponent, John Cherberg, was equivocal.⁷² Two City Council races also hinged to some extent on the issue. The Times and P. I. presented the issues "objectively," defining the issues as human rights versus property rights and refusing to take sides.⁷³

The defeat of the open housing ordinance on March 10, 1964 was devastating. Seattle voters turned down the ordinance 112,448 to 53,453, elected J. D. Braman by a comfortable margin, and reelected the two councilmen whose seats had been in danger over opponents who supported the ordinance.⁷⁴

The two-to-one defeat of open housing must have been a hard blow to the city's black populace, especially against the rising hopes produced by the vigorous activity in the nation-wide civil rights movement in 1964. However, perhaps the hardest hit by the overwhelming defeat were not Seattle's black citizens who had had good reason to be skeptical, but

⁷¹ Seattle P. I., March 8, 1964.

⁷² Seattle Times, March 3, 1964.

⁷³ Ibid., March 8, 1964.

⁷⁴ Ibid., March 11, 1964.

people like the ones who made up the Civic Unity Committee. One black told Alfred Westberg that "If we got a majority to pass the law, we wouldn't need the law."⁷⁵ There is little evidence that the ordinance, as written, would have been an effective foil to housing discrimination. The obvious reason for the defeat of the ordinance was the "racism" of the white community, its structuring of human relations on the basis of race. The failure of reasonable arguments to reverse this racist outlook was a blow to the technique of community education on which the CUC so heavily depended. The devastating defeat of the open housing ordinance at the polls probably shook the confidence of the members of the CUC in some of their assumptions about the nature of the race problem. While the creation of the official Human Rights Commission was the thing that convinced the United Good Neighbor Fund to cease funding of the CUC, the defeat of the ordinance was the major factor that prevented the enthusiasm necessary to continue the Committee on some other basis as some members wished to do.

Seattle did get around to passing fair housing legislation shortly after the death of Martin Luther King in April 1968. Guilt was the immediate motivation. As Reverend McKinney has put it, "This was legislation by assassination, which is a very costly method."⁷⁶ Seattle's

⁷⁵Westberg interview.

⁷⁶McKinney interview.

black population had dispersed in small numbers to neighborhoods that had been all-white by 1970, but the bulk of the over ten thousand new blacks in Seattle's population that were added during the decade of the Sixties lived in a somewhat expanded predominately black Central Area.⁷⁷

⁷⁷Seattle Department of Community Development, "1970 U. S. Census Data Maps, City of Seattle by Census Tract." University of Washington Library Documents Center.

CONCLUSION

Seattle's black community has achieved a high degree of success relative to its own past and to its counterparts in most large Northern and Western cities. This success, achieved largely in the last ten years and since the demise of the CUC, is measured by the growth of a large black middle class which is highly visible in many economic activities, is a political force of consequence, and is becoming increasingly dispersed. These are measures of success that are clearly in the terms of liberal goals and assumptions, as well as in terms of most black goals. They fall short of the goals of both but are far more than a token beginning.

Large numbers of black salesmen and women are visible in downtown Seattle's major retail stores, the black office work force is reaching substantial numbers, and black professionals are increasing significantly. Black skilled and semi-skilled manual laborers have found improved employment opportunities since the early 1960s, especially in large industries such as Boeing. The building trades and the upper echelons of business and industry remain problem areas, but there are signs of gradual change even here. Black politicians have represented the Central Area in the state legislature since the early 1950s. Today's state legislators from the Thirty-seventh District are Senator George Fleming and Representative Peggie Maxie, both black, and Representative John Eng, a Chinese American. The President of Seattle's City Council is Sam

Smith, a black man. Seattle's black community is a political force to be reckoned with in any local and many state elections. The residential distribution of blacks is still quite unbalanced, concentrating in the Central Area, but blacks and other minorities live in most of the city's neighborhoods and most of its suburbs. The Seattle Public Schools have achieved a measure of integration beyond that of housing patterns through a once-controversial and now accepted busing program that has placed a significant number of blacks in most schools and a significant number of whites in inner-city schools.

Substantial racial problems do remain and continue to defy liberal solutions in Seattle. The Central Area has a disproportionate share of unemployment, poverty, poor health, unsuitable and overcrowded housing, juvenile delinquency and adult crime. It still lacks sufficient services, especially retail stores. The Asian communities continue to have problems related to race, despite the common opinion that these minority peoples have succeeded in the United States. The Japanese American, for instance, has the highest average educational attainment of any segment of the population and yet this is not reflected by his presence in the higher levels of business and industry, in average income, or in social status. A growing racial problem concerns recent young Asian immigrants, especially those from Hong Kong, who have had difficulty adjusting to American life. Many of their problems are typical of all immigrant groups, however. But it is the existence of the concentrated problems of

the black ghetto that most exemplifies the more widespread inequalities in American life, inequalities that go beyond race.

Relatively, however, Seattle's minority communities are doing fairly well and the prospects for the future are better. The reasons for this success are complex and varied. The most important circumstances are probably the small percentage of minorities in the population, compared to other cities with greater problems, and the uncrowded housing patterns of Seattle.

How much of this success is attributable to the Civic Unity Committee?

The CUC's approach to racial problems was pre-eminently practical and realistic as opposed to idealistic. Its first task had been to ease the racial tensions of a wartime population swollen by migrants, many of whom, white and black, had come from the South. The first concern was to prevent racial violence which threatened vital war production, and only secondly to aid minorities within that framework. Committee members worked on specific situations such as the employment of black bus drivers and cases of discrimination in public accommodations, quietly exerting their influence as prominent citizens and representatives of the Mayor to contain and play down racial antagonisms. They talked with discriminators without threats of legal action or public exposure, attempting to understand the other point of view and trying to allay racial fears. The CUC was successful in keeping inflammatory racial stories

out of the press. The Committee avoided identifying itself with any specific group or interest, maintaining a neutral position and working for community solidarity in the interests of the city as a whole. The major exception to the quiet and conciliatory activities of the CUC during the war was its forthright and public position on the return of the Japanese Americans to Seattle in early 1945.

The wartime philosophy and methods of the CUC set the tone and style of the Committee for the rest of its existence. Committee reports and statements proudly pointed out the unique position of the CUC in the intergroup relations field as "the only agency in the community which does not represent a vested interest."¹ The Committee always tried to educate the white majority to understand the racial implications of American ideals of freedom and equality and to recognize their self-interest in racial justice. The CUC consistently opposed any actions such as publicity campaigns against discriminators which would polarize the city's racial groups. They advocated practical and positive measures which would be less of a threat to the white majority than confrontation methods. Members believed that this approach was realistically the best way to bring about change. In the drafting of civil rights legislation, from fair employment in the 1940s to open housing in the 1960s, the CUC counselled compromise and moderation as the only method capable of passing any laws. They were usually correct.

¹Louise Blackham, "Conclusions," undated c. 1954. CUC I, 1-2.

The Civic Unity Committee's approach to racial problems was most effective and appropriate during its first decade. The establishment of the Committee and others like it around the nation in 1944 filled a void of white leadership in civil rights for minorities. The CUC brought a new kind of civil rights advocate into action at a time when very few whites of any political stripe had time for minority rights. Prominent citizens of unquestioned loyalty added desperately needed respectability to the civil rights movement in an era of international Cold War and domestic reaction. By allaying the racial fears of key politicians, community leaders, and businessmen through personal contact, the CUC played a large role in legislative and economic breakthroughs in the first postwar decade. Those breakthroughs seem small now, but they stand out in a period remembered more for loyalty and security hearings and trials than for progressive legislation. These achievements laid the foundation for later activities and future gains in civil rights.

The CUC operated under various handicaps, some of them self-imposed. A constant problem was shortages of funds, staff, and other resources. There were many times when CUC methods were insufficient, as in the Sand Point housing case of 1952-1953, and other civil rights groups often rightly considered the CUC to be an obstacle to their work. But the CUC was at least as effective as its rival agencies in the early period. Few if any people realized the magnitude and depth of America's racial problem at that time.

In its second decade of operation, the Civic Unity Committee became less effective, especially when compared with rival civil rights groups. Direct action was winning important battles and bringing public awareness and a sense of urgency to civil rights in the 1960s. CUC methods of compromise and conciliation, though they complemented other methods, were gradually recognized by some members as ineffective in the face of pervasive and stubborn racism. Some CUC members grew to realize that the CUC approach had been naively optimistic about the Committee's ability to educate the white majority to be racially tolerant. Some came to believe that more forceful measures were needed to upset the pattern of racial discrimination in Seattle.²

Alfred J. Westberg has suggested that the CUC had "no genuine impact" on either the white or minority populations of Seattle because it was so little known. Those blacks who did know of the Committee looked upon it as "a sort of sewing society that was a waste of time."³ The failure of the CUC to develop a good working relationship with black leaders hindered its efforts to improve the city's race relations. White activists had a similar view of the CUC, especially in the early 1960s.

² Interview with Alfred J. Westberg, April 8, 1971. Westberg to author, June 16, 1971, on file at University of Washington Library, Manuscripts Collection. Westberg and Allen A. Zoll quoted in Frederick Dennis Garrity, "The Civic Unity Committee of Seattle," Masters Thesis, University of Washington, 1971, 84-85.

³ Westberg interview.

Because it was unable to lend approval or support to direct action for civil rights in its last years, the CUC lost touch with the rest of the movement and forfeited what influence it had had. But Westberg has also noted that the Committee at least educated its own members, most of whom represented economic or social groups which were not noted for interest in minority problems. Westberg believes that the CUC helped prepare its members for "bolder steps in the future,"⁴ and his own public career from 1948 to the present is a good example of one man's growth of understanding about race in America.

The overwhelming electoral defeat of Seattle's 1964 open housing ordinance surprised and disillusioned Civic Unity Committee members. The voters' two-to-one rejection of open housing challenged the basis of the Committee's "objective, educative and conciliatory" approach to race relations. The vote demonstrated that the city's white majority was not convinced of the need for special legislation to remedy racial discrimination, despite a vigorous educational campaign that went far beyond the resources and influence of the CUC. It also helped to reveal to a number of CUC members that the Committee had outlived its usefulness and even led some of them to question whether the CUC had ever played an important role in the civil rights movement. Though there was some sentiment

⁴Quoted in Garrity, "CUC of Seattle," 86.

for maintaining the agency as an advisory committee for the Seattle Human Rights Commission, most members were willing to let the CUC die. It closed its offices in June 1964.

The civil rights movement had undergone great changes in the early 1960s, with new emphasis placed on non-violent direct action. This dramatized America's racial injustice and brought pressure on discriminatory institutions, laws, and customs. August Meier and Elliott M. Rudwick wrote that "the really decisive break with the pre-eminence of legalistic techniques came with the college student sit-ins that swept the South in the spring of 1960. . . . [T]he youth had captured the imagination of the Negro community and to a remarkable extent of the whole nation."⁵ Direct action techniques exploited the news media, especially television, to great advantage, bringing America's racial problems to the attention of the nation. Direct action succeeded where education and conciliation had failed, both in terms of attracting the attention of the public and in terms of tangible achievement. The sit-ins, freedom rides, and marches pricked America's conscience. Seattle's own sit-ins and marches brought the reality of racial problems home to the Northwest, although most whites were still not willing to acknowledge them.

Civic Unity Committee members were threatened by the new tactics, which aroused racial tensions they had worked so long to soothe,

⁵From Plantation to Ghetto (New York, 1966), 227.

but they also realized the value of new methods. Executive Secretary Louise Blackham humbly acknowledged that the world of civil rights was changing in her August 1963 "Activities Report," and her uncharacteristic note of criticism of Seattle's race relations hints that the CUC was becoming less self-confident of its own ability to change racial patterns.

The realization that we cannot celebrate the centenary year of the Emancipation Proclamation with a great sense of pride has come to Seattle. This influence has been reflected in every aspect of Civic Unity Committee work. The development of new, aggressive—even militant—leadership in the community has made a deep and effective impression on the city and its institutions. Except for a short period of irresponsible activity by a group of immature young people [those arrested in July 1963], the impression must be one of dignified, justified pressure for the very goals that the long established agencies have been seeking for many years . . . [by other methods].

The 'freedom' movement has taken the new ways and, though they are not Civic Unity ways, they have undeniably been effective and are enjoying increasing support and cooperation from responsible, mature forces in the community. . . .

This report on the past six months in Seattle reflects the national stepped-up spirit of change and might serve as a stepping off place for the 1963-1964 year. . . .⁶

Blackham's memo to Archie Katz after the disastrous open housing referendum of 1964 implied acceptance of the new tactics of confrontation. "This community," she said, "i. e., its power group, is not buying equality of opportunity unless their own self interests are so threatened that they will actually sit down and think—of this I am now convinced."⁷

⁶"Activities Report, March 1, 1963 -August 31, 1963. CUC I, 8-3.

⁷Blackham to Katz, March 31, 1964. CUC IV, unprocessed. Emphasis in original.

The CUC was also threatened by the black leadership's demand for a more prominent role in the movement. In the first postwar decade the de-emphasis of black participation in such efforts as the campaign for a fair employment law was tactically sound and aided the passage of laws. By the 1960s, however, black people regarded such tactics as paternalistic. White domination of the civil rights movement was outmoded and unsatisfactory to the new mood of black Americans.

Civic unity's basic assumptions were challenged as the movement's goals, as well as its tactics, were radicalized in the early 1960s. The primary concerns of some important black leaders shifted away from constitutional rights, which had been the common focus of white and black race relations workers, especially after passage of the two major federal civil rights laws of 1964 and 1965. Blacks placed new emphasis on the development of the institutions of the black community as a whole and on black control of those institutions. Radical advocates of "black power" rejected white capitalist society and its "racist" institutions and opposed the concept of integration. Radicals viewed integration of individual blacks of merit as assimilation and a denial of the worth of the black subculture.⁸ The term black power was also used to describe a growing sense of black self-identity and pride. Such a usage, perhaps the most widespread of all, was not incompatible with the more traditional

⁸See especially Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton, Black Power (New York, 1967).

aspirations of the rising black middle class. But because black power was such a confused concept, the moderates of the CUC and many more liberal white civil rights workers found it threatening.

The role of the CUC in the civil rights movement must be appreciated with historical perspective. This would recognize the part it played when civil rights work was unfashionable, the attitudes of tolerance it nurtured, and the legislation it helped to conceive. The later phases of the civil rights movement are inconceivable without the preceding experiences of what one historian has called the "forgotten years of the Civil Rights Revolution."⁹

⁹Richard M. Dalfiume, Desegregation of the U. S. Armed Forces (Columbia, Mo., 1969), 1.

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