

Eighty-one days from today the Habitat United Nations Conference and Forum in Vancouver will begin. It is a seventeen-day meeting. We have been strategizing over what we are going to do there. Several weeks ago our colleagues and other interested people in Vancouver worked on a proposal for the United Nations Forum. They drew up a preliminary draft and sent it to the Social Demonstration Post. Both the post and the Vancouver Metro continued working and exchanging ideas. The proposal was finalized on February 6. Let me say a word about to whom we gave it and for what we are asking.

There are two conferences going on. One is the United Nations General Assembly. Every summer they just close down that building in New York and for several weeks go somewhere. Last summer they went to Geneva and before that, to Rome for the Food Conference. This summer they are going to Vancouver. The only way you can get into that conference is to be a United Nations delegate or be delegated by one of 136 participating countries. There will be about 5000 people in that conference at the downtown convention center. It will be complete with headphones, translation in seventeen or eighteen different languages, and TV coverage.

We are not really interested in that conference for we think it will be a three-week long, dull "position-paper-reading" kind of thing. But we are interested in the other one called Habitat Forum. This will involve sixteen to twenty-thousand people from the non-government groups and agencies of many countries. On the beach in Vancouver is an old park called Jericho Park, which has been given to Habitat Forum for their conference. The sixty-five acres of grass and beach have five old airport hangers and some other buildings on it. This has been turned into a huge pavilion by volunteer workers. People are already arriving from other countries and rolling up their sleeves. They have transformed those old hangers by using banners and silk screened hangings. They have built sidewalks and benches with cut-up logs found on the beaches. It is local people who just decided to come and are working with their hands to create this pavilion. But there is a question, "What in the world is going to happen in those buildings?" No one seems to have an agenda.

The Secretary of the Habitat Forum happens to be a pharmacist from Van Puten, a little town outside The Hague. When I heard his name I thought he was some important ambassador from somewhere, but he is a local man. He doesn't have any money or any influence, he is just a local man, and he is in charge of the Habitat Forum. He also has an international committee that is composed of ministers and local people from all over the world who have met a couple of times. Their committee was meeting in Vancouver, February 12-16, in order to decide the agenda for the Habitat Forum. That is what we are preparing for.

We have submitted our proposal. They received about a thousand proposals. We do not have any idea of the status of ours at this particular time. But we have asked for two things: funding and space. The funding comes from the various countries. We are requesting funding in order to bring representatives from our

eight social demonstrations to the Habitat Forum. If we could get three to six people from Kwangyung-Il, Maliwada, and so forth to come, it would be helpful to have them visit in the North American Continent for awhile and then stay for the summer program. They might participate in the ITP, visit the Houses, go to the Academy next fall and then go back home. We have hope for our proposal because they are anxious to have representation from the Third World at the Habitat Forum. Two-thirds of all the people coming now are white, western Americans, Canadians or from similar cultures. But this is a United Nations Conference, and they want this forum to represent the Third World peoples, so we feel they are going to want to respond to our proposal.

If we can get representation from each of the eight social demonstrations, we have asked for space, not very large but basically a kind of seminar room. We included a design in the proposal. There are panels on the walls for the eight social demonstrations. The seating is for fifty people. The design includes audio-visual equipment, slide projectors, screens, and so forth. It would be our hope to gather the representatives from these demonstrations at Chicago Nexus a week or two early so they could work with the Social Demonstration Post and develop the presentations. The presentations probably need to run in a sequence with four to six on one day. People could come in and stay in the seminar room for an hour or two. They might see and hear the Maliwada story. Kawangware might be that noon, and that night, Majuro, and so forth. Boom, boom, boom, one after another in sequence. Meanwhile we would use all our troops to do selective visitation, answer questions, man the booths, give out information. Throughout all this, the ICA would be in the background. Local man would stand up and tell, "What Happened in My Village Because We Used These Methods and Because We Care." So we have asked for space and funding for transportation of the social demonstration representatives. An alternative would be to use eight to sixteen of our international staff who have been to the projects or would be able to make the presentations.

At the end of the whole Habitat Forum a consensus statement will be produced, then be presented to the United Nations Assembly. We can be a part of that. We can participate in creating that consensus statement. It is a ticklish, scary situation. There were rumors it was going to turn into a kind of "Woodstock" with hippies coming with their tents and wagons. The city of Vancouver has said a loud, "No!" to that. There will be no camping or sleeping on the grass at the Pavilion. There will be police forces and armies to control it. The establishment has made a very strong decision that the Habitat Forum is going to be an orderly creative event.

While we have been working to get our proposal into the hopper, we have gotten to know people within the city of Vancouver, the government of Canada, the Hague, and the United Nations. We are discovering a network of people all over this world which we feel will be helpful in the future. The proposal has been our entry.

The date of Habitat Forum is May 27 to June 12, 1976.

Ladies and gentlemen, on this solemm but joyous occasion of the celebration of this nation's 200th birthday, I find myself in what is a most unusual position; that of one participating in a patriot's dream. I have lived for four decades in uninterrupted offense at the very thought of national pride - for reasons that many of you would share, as well as some that are due to the idiosyncrasies of my own experience.

I do believe, however, that this dream of future glory springs not from my ephemeral imagination, but from the depths of this nation's real past - and that having not to do with the incredible prosperity with which the accidents of nature and the accomplishments of ingenuity have endowed it, but rather with the painful and glorious events with which the course of human history has confronted it. And these events occasion our asking what the future holds.

The events to which I will point do not remove the offense I have felt - quite the contrary is true. It seems to me that we are the scarred survivors of two great civil wars: in the first, our original countrymen fought for political freedom; in the second, citizens of the young nation battled for economic unity. Both wars, at a cost too terrible to enumerate, are, in fact, what birthed this nation, and inasmuch were contributions of great global significance. In both cases, the 100 years following the formal conflict were spent in appropriating the consequences.

I will say only a word about each of these wars in order to bring us to the present time, in which we are faced once again with the prospect of great national travail. Yes, the birth analogy is quite appropriate, because that is the root meaning of the word "nation." I am offended that existence comes forth in pain, but that seems to be the inescapable journey of becoming a people.

In 1776, those who formulated our original declaration to the world said that we have the right to determine our own destiny, and they pledged their lives, fortunes and sacred honor to each other in support of that radically human conviction. It is not that there had never been a free people before, but this war, somehow, was a dramatic new experiment.

Then, after a hundred years of living in a loose federation, an issue of unity arose that had to be faced on behalf of all the nations of the earth: that is, whether the inalienable right of equal economic opportunity would be honored. Would a portion of the population be designated for animal labor to serve the rest, or would the fruits of technology be used to set all citizens free for the pursuit of happiness, with the equity due to every human creature by the simple virtue of his birth? Thus our second "civil war" stated once-and-for-all that the purpose of human life is not bondage to animal activity, but rather the unending exploration of what it means to be human.

It is conceivable that, by a variety of means, we could have aborted both our political and economic opportunities. Yet, without these two great conflicts

having been resolved, the third would be unthinkable. But, the course of human history has determined once again that the struggle is upon us. And, as before, we can shrink from it only at the peril of our whole planet. We have been chosen, not because of some moral superiority, but in the light of historical faithfulness.

Now, what is this struggle we face for the next hundred years? And what are our resources for participation? It is, in gratitude for the price our nation paid for political rights and economic opportunity, to pledge ourselves in mutual effort toward the appropriation of a cultural revolution which history has offered us as our inheritance, but which the whole planet needs to the point of desperation. I mean a revolution in human settlement, the formulation of a new style of local living. This is, in the first place, a state of being: it's name, in the language of one of my colleagues, is "new town."

But the realization of this great dream finds us faced with unavoidable conflict. We would not have wished it, but we cannot avoid deciding whether the aim and implementation of this revolution are worth the giving of our lives. The choice is clear: we can do nothing and the forces of anti-humaness will engulf us. We can let our fellow citizens sleep, and never bring their dream to consciousness. We can abandon them to natural inclinations until the silent equality of death takes over.

Or, with the skills and implements that we have developed in recent years, we can conduct the twin campaigns which this war against unhumaness requires. This is the time for us to be the generals - by which I mean the high-minded and self-sacrificing leaders we have for so long trained ourselves to be. We can, with Town Meeting, awaken every village and city neighborhood, calling them to rise and join the march of civilization into the 21st century. We can, by our example, persuade them to demonstrate a new quality of human life, never before seen on this planet. Such dreaming is, to me, not made of whimsy and wishes, but of firm resolve and radical determination. And I add this sobering concretion: the next 12 months will tell the tale for the Town Meeting Campaign, and set the course for Social Demonstration.

One thing is sure as the Order gathers here today, the sensitive and responsive part of a nation facing its future role, which is still struggling after 200 years to live on behalf of all the world's citizens: These are the times. We are the people.