

renewal project and to undertake an immediate survey to qualify it for federal funds.

### *University of Chicago*

The plan called for the clearing of a strip of land one block deep and one mile in length along the southern boundary of the campus extending from Cottage Grove to Stony Island. The university's plan was to clear the area and extend its campus.

Part of the devastating effect this announcement had on the people of Woodlawn was in the realization that the university had fully developed its urban renewal plan and had already announced it through the news media. With all the university's political and economic power, early approval of the plan from the city government was almost a sure thing.

After the announcement appeared in the paper the feeling throughout the community and especially among the homeowners was, "We are doomed. The university is going to take over all of Woodlawn." There was absolutely no thought in the mind of most of the people of Woodlawn that anything could be done to change the anticipated efforts of the university, because they knew how the university had controlled the Hyde Park-Kenwood urban renewal program. This was typical of the fear and powerlessness that pervades the black communities throughout the nation. Historically, their fears are well grounded. Black people do not have a history of winning victories against the power structure.

Further, the university was no small college. It was a veritable giant. It had over a thousand faculty members, most of whom held Ph.D. degrees or equivalent professional degrees. It held a worldwide reputation as the place where man's first controlled self-sustaining nuclear chain reaction was achieved. It operated such famous institutions as Argonne Laboratories, Argonne Cancer Research Hospital, Albert Merit Billings Hospital, Bobs Roberts Memorial Hospital, Chicago Lying-In Hospital, the Nathan Goldblatt Memorial Hospital, and many clinics. The University of Chicago had a staff of more than 15,000 person and ranked among the ten largest employers in metropolitan Chicago.

The residents of Woodlawn, however, had no reason to love the university. Prior to the middle sixties the university had projects

## Chapter Five

### *Battle with Urban Renewal*

Just when TWO was beginning to flex its muscles, it was confronted by a giant that struck fear, hostility, and despair into the hearts of the people. The giant was the University of Chicago. Its weapon of destruction was a plan for urban renewal in Woodlawn.

The news of the university's plan for urban renewal first broke on the Woodlawn community in an article by Ruth Moore in the *Chicago Sun Times* dated July 20, 1960. It stated:

A 75 million dollar enlargement of the University of Chicago's south of the Midway campus plus the clearing of the slums that surround it was proposed today. Chancellor Lawrence A. Kimpton and University Trustees made the proposal under a new federal law that would bring the city of Chicago not only the six million 500 thousand dollars needed for the clearance of the area, but an estimated wind-fall of 14 million 400 thousand dollars in federal urban renewal funds. The 14 million 400 thousand dollars could be used for any other urban renewal or conservation project in any part of the city and would be available to Chicago without the city having to contribute even a cent of its own funds. The University officials said under the new law the University expenditures in an urban renewal area (the University is in the Hyde Park-Kenwood area) can be counted as the required one-third local contribution to urban renewal. . . . The city would obtain 14 million 400 thousand dollars clear without being required to provide one cent of matching funds. The proposal was laid before the Chicago land clearance commission at its meeting at 320 North Clark. The University asked the Commission to declare the south campus area as urban

of research and development in such far-off places as Pakistan, yet it spent nothing to relieve poverty in Woodlawn. Typical of so many large universities, it simply ignored the poor in its own backyard. It went further; it even built a barbed-wire barrier against the Woodlawn residents along part of the south side of its campus. Little wonder citizens of the black community grow cynical about America's self-righteous criticism of such affronts to freedom as the Berlin Wall, when they see walls erected everywhere against them by the white Establishment. The university was the ever present, glaring example to Woodlawn residents.

The period immediately following the announcement of the university's urban renewal plan became the most critical period in the early history of TWO. How could despair be transformed into courage? How could apathy be converted into action? There was no time for careful consideration or orderly planning. Leaders of TWO, along with the staff and all available volunteers, moved throughout the community, informing the people of what was happening, focusing and defining the issues and fanning the smoldering fires of anger into a blue flame of action. In a dramatic meeting TWO voted to oppose the University of Chicago's expansion plan. The secretary wrote to Washington stating that because the community had not participated in planning the urban renewal, TWO opposed the plan and demanded it be stopped immediately. This initiated a bitter conflict that lasted from 1961 through 1963. Without The Woodlawn Organization the community would have been powerless to protect itself against the bulldozing power of the giant university.

The Woodlawn Organization never opposed the plan for the expansion of the south campus, per se. TWO did oppose the piecemeal planning for the Woodlawn community that served the interests of outside power structures without benefiting the people of Woodlawn. TWO also opposed the plan because the people of Woodlawn had not been involved in the planning process. The university was expanding into Woodlawn by using the vehicle of urban renewal. Fortunately for Woodlawn, the urban renewal law stated very clearly that there must be citizen participation in plans for urban renewal.

The south campus plan, as it was proposed, benefited the University of Chicago only. It was clear that the cost would be prohibi-

tive if the university were forced to purchase the land privately. Private acquisition would mean that the university would have to run down the titles to all of the buildings in the proposed expansion area that it did not already own and negotiate on an individual basis with individual owners for all properties. After purchasing all of the buildings, the university would have to hire demolition contractors to clear all the land and make it available for the erecting of new buildings. It was far less expensive from the university's point of view to have the area declared slum and blighted and made an urban renewal area. The city could use tax money to purchase the property at condemnation prices, clear the land, and then sell the raw land back to the university for less than a dollar per square foot.

TWO asked to meet with the South East Chicago Commission, a powerful local organization comprised of private individuals with Julian Levi of the University of Chicago as executive director. This commission was the spokesman for the University of Chicago in all matters pertaining to urban renewal. Repeated requests for a meeting with the SECC to negotiate a settlement were refused. To meet with TWO alone would have been tantamount to recognizing TWO as the community organization and spokesman for Woodlawn, which was precisely TWO's claim.

The South East Chicago Commission responded by demanding to meet with all the local groups of Woodlawn. TWO represented over a hundred groups in Woodlawn, and would not go into a meeting with four or five other groups representing practically no one but themselves and in such a meeting be outvoted five to one. At no point, however, would the South East Chicago Commission sit down with TWO alone, and so the battle with the University become a stalemate.

### *City of Chicago Planning*

TWO then turned to city officials and insisted that nothing be done in the south campus area until an over-all renewal plan for Woodlawn could be drawn up with the people of Woodlawn participating on a meaningful level.

In a stormy meeting in the chambers of City Council TWO demanded that the city undertake a survey of the community to

ascertain how the entire Woodlawn area could benefit from the university's proposed urban renewal program. The city agreed to do this, and several months later city planners came up with a proposal labeled "For Discussion Purposes Only."

The package was drawn up in typical city fashion, with absolutely no citizen participation. For months TWO had tried to find out what the City Planning Department was doing, but to no avail. Their position seemed to be that the local residents may have an opportunity to express their ideas only after all the plans have been drawn up. This means that the people have only two choices—to oppose the plan or to accept the plan. TWO's philosophy is that the people themselves must be a part of the *entire planning process* from beginning to end. The Woodlawn Organization took a bold step at this point and engaged a group of private city planners to do a critique of the city of Chicago's proposal and to propose alternatives to it.

This tactic put the city of Chicago in the middle of the conflict. The city had run out of funds for urban renewal programs and wanted the \$14 million from Section 112 of the Housing Act of 1959.<sup>1</sup> For the city to receive this money the University of Chicago had to sign certification papers. The university would not sign those papers until the city produced some kind of urban renewal program that would guarantee the university the land needed for the south campus. This the city could not do, because the people of the community were not in favor of the university's plan as it then existed and had vetoed it.

At this point TWO felt that powerful segments of the white society were closing in on it. The *Christian Century*, a well-known religious periodical, joined forces with the University of Chicago and bitterly attacked The Woodlawn Organization, the Industrial Areas Foundation, and the Roman Catholic Church in an editorial dated May 10, 1961. The editorial quoted largely

<sup>1</sup>The University of Chicago, working in consort with 20 universities in 1959, was able to persuade Congress to enact Section 112 of the Housing Act of 1959, which provided in effect that when a university had spent its own funds in acquisition of properties for campus expansion in accordance with an approved grant, those expenditures upon certification by the university would be recognized as local non-cash-grants-in-aid for the benefit of the municipality. Hence, a city assisting a university in the expansion of its campus could secure matching federal funds without cost to the city.

from an article by Ruth Moore in the *Chicago Sun Times* interpreting the conflict in terms of open or closed cities. Miss Moore and *The Christian Century* accused TWO of a program that "in its own words is to rub raw the sores of discontent and to rouse dormant hostilities," of a "passion for keeping masses of people from being 'redeveloped out' of their slums," and of being used by the Roman Catholic Church to delay integration of nearby white Catholic areas. Miss Moore pictured the University of Chicago as working for open cities and humane progress along with most of the Protestant churches in the area. The *Christian Century* charged that the church was identifying with the demagogic methods of the IAF, and that the Protestant ministers and leaders were not being true to their Christian commitment in that they were forsaking "the promotion of voluntary cooperation and the concept of the open city, both of which are implicit in the Christian gospel, advocating instead salvation through compulsion practiced through predatory power structures dominating closed cities. . . ."

TWO reacted to this as an irresponsible and misleading piece of journalism. It was filled with innuendo, half-truths, and misleading statements. The spokesman for TWO categorically denied the editorial's charges against the organization. He also questioned the statement about the university's working for an open society on the basis of the Hyde Park-Kenwood urban renewal project, and suggested that the cause of justice would have been better served had these remarks about closed cities been directed at the Chicago Real Estate Board.

The Public Relations Office of the University of Chicago tried to persuade several daily newspapers in Chicago to make something of the fact that the Catholic Church supported Saul Alinsky and the work of the IAF in Woodlawn. The newspapers refused to be a part of the matter, so the material was published in the *Chicago Maroon*, the student weekly paper. Dr. Joseph Sitler, a member of the faculty of the University of Chicago's Divinity School, called the article an irresponsible piece of journalism and formally protested its publication.

Charles Silberman in his book *Crisis in Black and White* supported Dr. Sitler's position and went on to say:

University officials apparently have regarded the Church as an enemy ever since 1958, when Monsignor John Egan, Executive

Director of the Cardinal's Committee on Community Organization and Urban Renewal, criticized the then-pending Hyde Park-Kenwood urban renewal program. Monsignor Egan saw the program, quite rightly, as a venture in Negro removal; he pointed out that plans called for demolition of a great deal of adequate housing occupied largely by Negroes, and that few of these residents would be able to afford the new apartments and houses that were to be erected. . . .

In any event, the Woodlawn Organization certainly was not the product of any Papist conspiracy. On the contrary, the organization represents one of the most meaningful examples of Protestant-Catholic co-operation to be found anywhere in the United States. . . . The result has been the collaboration of the Archdiocese, the Chicago Presbytery, and the Church Federation of Chicago. The involvement of church leaders of all denominations in social action to improve the Negro's lot is TWO's most enduring contribution.<sup>5</sup>

TWO did not take a purely negative stance toward the University of Chicago's problem, but made positive recommendations. One of these, which was finally accepted, was that a portion of the \$14 million in federal credits should be used to benefit the people of Woodlawn. TWO further proposed that three blocks of deteriorated commercial structures, from 60th to 63rd streets on Cottage Grove Avenue, be demolished and that new low-cost, low-rise housing be erected in their place. There would be very little relocation of families because the area was basically composed of dilapidated and deteriorated communal structures. It was because of the minimum need for relocation that TWO recommended the site.

TWO recommended 221 (D) 3 housing because at that time (1961-1963) it was thought throughout the country to be the kind of housing poor people could afford. (It has since been discovered that 221 (D) 3 is not the panacea everyone thought it was at that time.)

Mayor Daley broke the stalemate in 1963. He called a meeting of TWO representatives and representatives from the University of Chicago. This meeting and another subsequent one firmly estab-

<sup>5</sup>Charles Silberman, *Crisis in Black and White* (New York: Random House, 1964), pp. 340 ff.

lished the right of the people to participate in the planning of their community.

The mayor agreed to several points:

- (1) A citizen's committee would be appointed by the mayor to deal with urban renewal in Woodlawn.
- (2) TWO would have a majority of members on the committee.
- (3) The deteriorated commercial structures on Cottage Grove between 60th and 63rd streets would be demolished and low-cost, low-rise (but not public) housing would be erected by a non-profit corporation.
- (4) No buildings on south campus would be demolished until the land on Cottage Grove was cleared and new construction begun.
- (5) The person appointed as administrator for urban renewal would have to be acceptable to TWO.

After the struggle over south campus was won in principle, slow, faltering improvements took place in relations between the university and TWO. Reconciliation was slow to come. The struggle had been long and bitter. Mistrust on both sides left deep scars, which to this day have not completely disappeared. Reconciliation is occurring, however, and it is most evident in the mutual support and working relationships that have been built during the development of TWO's model cities plan.

Some residual effects of the earlier struggle still remain. Many Woodlawn people are still convinced that the university is not truly concerned with the welfare of Woodlawn residents. Many believe that the university has hidden plans to take over the entire community via the bulldozer, with no concern for the human problem that would be left in its wake. This nagging suspicion is a hindrance to full cooperation, and everything possible must be done by the university to demonstrate that it is not biding its time before turning Woodlawn into the southern part of its physical plant.

The Woodlawn Organization decided that not only should it be in on the planning of this first urban renewal battle but the community ought to help plan the development of new housing as well. Since the 221 (D) 3 housing could be built with federal financing, TWO felt that with the proper assistance it could develop the Cottage Grove land.

TWO sent a proposal for rehabilitation to Victor De Grazia, Executive Vice President of the Kate Maremont Foundation. This foundation was active in rehabilitation work in the ghettos of Chicago. TWO needed seed money for engaging architects to draw plans for the development of the site and to process the proposal to its completion. Since this could be federally financed, all seed money spent by the foundation would be returned to the foundation. The foundation was interested in this proposal and agreed to make the seed money available.

A separate corporation, The Woodlawn Organization-Kate Maremont Development Association, resulted. To insure community control of the project TWO would always have the chairmanship of the board of directors as well as the majority of the board members. When the Cottage Grove land was put up for bid the new development association's bid was accepted. At this writing the corporation is beginning to build 502 housing units on the site.

## Chapter Six

### *Urban Education Developmental Project*

There is a great deal of evidence to show that inner-city schools of the kind found in the Woodlawn area are not educating many of the children whom they serve. Teachers and administrators may try, but they do not get through to ghetto children. Proof of this lies in the low levels of achievement of the children and in the large number of dropouts. Children who grow up in communities such as Woodlawn are unprepared to learn what school has to offer. They see little relationship between what happens inside the school and outside the school. As long as ghetto schools operate as if they served only the white middle-class society they will fail to reach ghetto children.

This chapter is the story of the collaboration between The Woodlawn Organization, the Chicago Public Schools, and the University of Chicago. What makes it so remarkable is that only a few short years before the beginning of this school project TWO and the University of Chicago were locked in combat over the problem of urban renewal. The new relationship between TWO and the university illustrates in a dramatic way that conflict and confrontation can be resolved creatively and can lead to reconciliation and collaboration.

The University of Chicago began to take seriously its responsibility to the Woodlawn neighborhood lying just south of the campus. Previously the university had been active in research and development in projects scattered far and wide over the earth but had ignored the massive problems at its doorstep. In his com-