



# THE OBSERVER

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## The Poor March To Washington

By Karen Walkowitz

This spring, the poor people of America are gathering together to demand decent jobs and incomes in massive demonstrations in Washington, D.C. Black Americans, Spanish, Puerto Rican and Mexican American, American Indians and White Americans have all joined together to challenge our nation, and specifically the powers in Washington, to end poverty and racism in this country.

For most, May 30 is the prominent date of this Poor People Campaign since it is on that day when all concerned peoples have been asked to come to Washington to join in the cry to end poverty. The campaign, however, is more than just a one day stand. The formal plans for the demonstration began this winter under the auspices of the late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) with the support and participation of many local groups and individuals. People next began arriving in Washington as early as May 12 in caravans originating in various parts of the country. As these people arrive they are building, in a central part of the capital, a "shanty town" which is representative of the living conditions that exist for the 35 million poor in this country (income of \$3,130 a year for a family of four). These people are prepared to stay in "shanty town" until the demands they have made are met.

The campaign people will build powerful nonviolent demonstrations on the issues of jobs, income, welfare, housing, education, and human rights. A list of definite demands will be presented to the centers of government power. These demands will cost billions of dollars, but it is the belief of these people that the richest nation of all time can afford to spend this money, especially if it stops spending so much of its funds on what they consider to be an immoral and unjust war in Asia.

Specifically, the most important piece of legislation being demanded is for a bill of economic and social rights. This includes a meaningful job at a living wage provided for every employable citizen; that for all those who cannot find jobs or for whom employment is inappropriate—a secure and adequate income be provided. They are asking the Secretary of State to use his powers to prevent foreign workers from taking the jobs of American citizens, the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development to increase the quality and quantity of housing for low income families by allowing the poor to share in planning, and by letting the poor work to build housing. The Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare is being asked to expand on Medicare and Medicaid Programs to include all indigents, to start sanitation programs to rid the poor of rats, vermin, and polluting sewage; to give the poor a chance to design and operate programs which affect their children's education, even if this means taking away funds from colleges and institutions which don't really need them; to provide an adequate welfare program, (only one fourth of the poor are now being aided by existing programs).

More vigorous enforcement of the Civil Rights Acts of 1957, 1960, 1964, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 is being demanded since it is felt that discrimination in many parts of the country is actually increasing, especially in the field of labor.

Perhaps the entire aim of the Poor People's Campaign can best be summed up in this declaration made by the Campaign Committee: "Let no man say that we are lazy, or criminal, or ignorant, or that we are undeserving until we have been given our measure of justice, a chance to work, a chance to learn, a chance to build. Some measure of the opportunity this land of ours has always promised to us, must at last be ours."



### Blood Drive For Sally

NEED BLOOD - WON'T YOU PLEASE HELP!

Little Sally Harrington, five years old needs your help. Sally has a rare blood disease, a plastic anemia...the recruitment is aimed for the May 20th, and June 17th, which will be conducted by the Red Cross in Pontiac. Donors are urged to make appointments with the Red Cross at least one week in advance to facilitate scheduling.

May 20th - Congregation B'Nai Israel, 143 Onieda -- 2:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

June 17th - Pontiac Elks Club, 114 Orchard Lake.

Although Sally has no blood debt now, she uses the equivalent of 60 pints of blood per week. Sally can be cured with your HELP! Won't you please GIVE! Please CALL the STUDENT ACTIVITIES CENTER, if you wish to give, ext. 2182.