

A New Detroit?

Frank H. Joyce
Fred Baker
Benjamin Hababee

1967

Curious.

The same people who built the old Detroit, which the people burned down because apparently they didn't like it much, have been selected to build the new Detroit.

Mostly they have already built the new Detroit. It is called Southfield and Oak Park and Bloomfield Hills and Birmingham and Westland and Harper Woods and Grosse Pointe and Livonia and Madison Heights. That is the new Detroit. They built it in the 'fifties while we weren't looking.

Who?

John Armstrong, President, Darin & Armstrong Company (a construction firm). Walker Cisler, Chairman of the Board, Detroit Edison. William Day, President, Michigan Bell Telephone Co., Henry Ford II. Hans Gehrke, Chairman, Greater Detroit Board of Commerce. William McClintock, President, Michigan Bankers Association. Ralph McElvenny, President, Michigan Consolidated Gas Co. Curtis Potter, Mayor of Royal Oak (Negro population: zero) Michigan. Mel Ravitz, Chairman Wayne County Board of Supervisors. Walter P. Reuther, Chairman, Detroit Revolutionary League. James P. Roche, President, South African Investment Fund (also known as the General Motors Corporation—"What's Good for GM is good for GM"). That's who.

All chaired by the ubiquitous Joseph Lowthian Hudson Junior. Mr. Hudson's corporate connections extend throughout the metropolitan area.

He is best remembered for his companies involvement, through Hudson's Vice President for Real Estate and Community affairs Mr. Foster Winter, in the building of Lafayette Park. Much of the original financing for Lafayette Park came from the Citizen's Redevelopment Corporation of which Mr. Winter is now the President. Citizen's redevelopment was incorporated in 1955. Mr. Winter, along with Walter Reuther and others, was one of the original incorporators.

It was the Redevelopment Corporation which made the decision not to include low-income housing in the development, the primary purpose of which was to offset the dwindling tax and commercial base caused by the flight of whites to the suburbs. (Kern's Department Store, where are you?)

As a matter of fact, no low-income housing has ever been built for the thousands (at least 2,500) of individuals who were displaced by the Gratiot Redevelopment Project which bulldozed the people off the land on which Lafayette Park now stands.

The complete story of the Citizen's Redevelopment Corporation will be detailed in future issues of the Fifth Estate. It is already clear, however, that J.L. Hudson Jr. is eminently qualified to return Detroit back to normal.

Back to normal. Business as usual.

George Romney is running for President again. Cavanagh is running. Louis Lomas, if he was ever here in the first place is nowhere to be found.

The Small Business Administration will provide thirty-year loans at 3% so the exploiters can return to reap their profits once again.

In the midst of all this back to normal, the city's black people, for the first time since the uprising, held a meeting on Wednesday evening, August 9.

They filled the city county building auditorium where two weeks before Cavanagh, Romney, Vance, Throckmorton and all those people showed up to announce the formation of Hudson's committee.

For the first meeting, black people were brought in from city agencies to fill the chairs.

This time they came on their own and overflowed the two story paneled, carpeted auditorium. It was undoubtedly the first time that "Soul" had ever had possession of the chambers which it built and owns for even a few hours. Just as three weeks before they had taken possession of their part of the city for a few days for the first time.

The theme of the meeting was that they will take possession again. For good. As soon as possible.

Milton Henry said, "We want freedom to control our lives in all its activities..."

There will be hell. We will live in constant fury until we're free."

Finally after many speakers Albert Cleage spoke. "There has been more truth spoken in this chamber today than in all the days since this building was erected."

The meeting was called to form a real grass roots committee to build a new Detroit. And form a committee they did. There were no elections. Seven names were shouted from the floor and noted by the secretary. Names you never heard of.

Cleage said, "We'll take care of the building. We'll build stores. We'll build shopping centers..."

"We have the power. You are the new black establishment and the white man has got to come to grips with the fact that he has to deal with us."

If a new Detroit is built this committee will build it.

J.L. Hudson will not. He couldn't if he wanted to.

fifth Estate

Frank H. Joyce
Fred Baker
Benjamin Hababee
A New Detroit?
1967

<https://www.fiftheastate.org/archive/36-august-15-31-1967/a-new-detroit>
Fifth Estate #36, August 15-31, 1967

fiftheastate.anarchistlibraries.net