

# Detroit Renaissance

Harvey Ovshinsky

1969

The transformation of life in its entirety begins when men dare to rule their own lives.

—A narchos

The Detroit revolutionary community needs its own turf.

There are tens of thousands of people in this area who read the *Fifth Estate*, take part in anti-war demonstrations, go to the Grande, listen to WABX, smoke dope, won't listen to their parents, to the police, to college administrators or to their bosses.

The thread that ties all of these people together is that they know either intellectually or instinctively that this system is unfit for anyone to live in.

Usually when large numbers of people in a large area come simultaneously, but independently to this conclusion there is a social dynamic which produces a hip community. Detroit has no such area and hence our people are scattered through the metropolitan area of 3-1/2 million people.

A concentration of all of our people in one geographically defined area or our "turf" would allow us to create and maintain a community that would reflect our revolutionary values and not the ones of this society.

Detroit already has several things going for it. Our musical reputation has spread across the country and record companies are flooding into Detroit to sign local groups. The Grande Ballroom is also renowned as one of the top music spots in the nation.

According to members of Up Against the Wall, Motherfuckers from New York City, freeks are planning to come to Detroit from all over this Spring.

This means we must be ready for the beginning of both our own community and the possible influx of large numbers from outside. Without prior planning any attempt at community could quickly degenerate into an ugly Haight-Ashbury or Plum Street scene.

To this end a group of twenty or so have banded together to organize a tight, determined committee called "Open City." The purpose of this article is to excite enough readers into reacting positively towards the idea and to join in turning the city on.

Here's how it's set up so far. There already is a "central committee" of Open City people who have been meeting at homes and in parties to prepare the first introduction of Open City at a public meeting to be held in February. This meeting (held probably in a campus church) will bring together hundreds of people to discuss and add on to at least the six projects Open City will work hardest on.

The crux of this first public meeting will involve introducing the original, hard core Open City people to the community, and discussing and changing the following six projects:

- 1) Housing: will include checking into Co-ops and making a check of all available apartments in the area. Finding crash pads and temporary shelter too.
- 2) Hip Job Co-op: The Job Co-op will provide a central phone and address for people who need jobs or services.

3) Health, Education and Welfare: will be the largest project and will include free legal aid, distributing “what to do if you’re busted” cards, classes in self- defense, a free clinic, listing and supporting free universities or even hip nurseries (both of which already exist).

4) Entertainment: will involve negotiating with local show places and special events about cheaper prices and admission, organizing free concerts and supporting already existing institutions (like Detroit Rep. and Detroit Cinema Guild) And most important, getting a street theatre troupe going.

5) Stores: will be the most exciting tangible project. This will involve setting up at least one non-profit, high-quality supply store. Records, books, and clothing made by our own people will be among the products sold at near distributor cost. Also Judy Davis, Fifth Estate “Eat It” girl, could be convinced to open up her own restaurant.

6) Food: will entail organizing and involving already active food co-ops, using the Eastern Market and making a check on the cheapest place to shop and boycotting those area stores whose prices are just too high. It’s also not out of the question to set up our own food store (with people who know how to do it) or at least taking advantage of WCO’s store.

When we speak of “community” we’re not just talking about the Warren-Forest area or Highland Park, although that’s where our efforts will be directed. We will need help from all our people and if you live within fifty miles of the community, then ZAP! you’re in our community.

We have let the system make our choices for us for too long. We have begun to direct our creative energies towards an era when we can spend ourselves instead of money while exhausting ourselves in struggle and dance.

If you want to attend Open City meetings and actually help design and conclude these projects then fill out the coupon on this page and mail it to Open City, c/o 1172 W. Hancock, Apt. 22, Detroit, Michigan. 48201.

Join us.

# fifth Estate

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