

Chicago's gangs: who benefits?

Part 3 of reporter Roy Harvey's award-winning series

This week Executive Intelligence Review continues with part three of its publication of excerpts from Chicago Defender reporter Roy Harvey's award-winning series on Chicago gangs. Copies of the complete series may be obtained directly from the Chicago Defender, 2400 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60616.

June 26: Daley accepts offer 'he couldn't refuse'

The next step in the creation of the gangs was to finance them with federal funds.

The University of Chicago played a key role at every juncture so far. In spite of the hopes of U. of C. coordinators such as Julian Levi, the front organizations could not yet operate on their own.

Here is the situation that faced City Hall, as described by John Hall in his book *Black Power/White Control*: "The Blackstone Rangers [were] entering into a relationship with the strongest black organization in the city [TWO]."

The irony of it was that the University of Chicago, via the First Presbyterian Church, was the creator and controller of both organizations!

And now the two organizations were entering into an alliance with the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), bypassing City Hall, for an experimental "on-the-job-training" gang program in which the teachers would be the gangsters.

By now six years old, the Woodlawn Organization was disliked by all the other institutions in the community, notes John Fish (a TWO supporter and a member of Rev. John Fry's church): "The schools, Boys' Club, YWCA, Urban Progress Center, and youth welfare agencies had never had a cordial relationship with TWO...."

As we have seen, the University had played the key role in writing the OEO proposal. The next step was to get it past Mayor Richard J. Daley.

Washington-based OEO deputy director Jerome Bernstein wanted to bypass the mayor altogether, classifying the gang project a "demonstration project" and conduiting the money directly to TWO and the gangs.

Why was Bernstein so intent on the experimental project?

Lewis A. Caldwell, state representative of the 29th district at the time, recalls Julian Levi "during that time lived on a plane, flying back and forth between here and Washington. Julian was bird-dogging to bring in federal money."

According to John Fish, Daley was at first friendly toward the idea of the OEO experimental on-the-job-training gang project, but when he learned that he wouldn't control it, he backed away.

Alderman Roman Pucinski (D-41st), who was then a congressman, remembers it another way. Pucinski told the *Defender*: "Daley followed the police recommendation. The police reported that the OEO program would be used to perpetuate the gang structure, would be used to recruit members. Daley's views on the program reflected the police department's, and mine did too."

The other major voice in opposition to the program came from Deton Brooks, head of the Chicago Committee on Urban Opportunity (CCUO), through which City Hall administered the poverty programs in Chicago.

But for the political ambitions of Kennedy in-law Sargent Shriver, who headed up the Office of Economic Opportunity, Daley might have been bypassed.

Julian Levi wasn't the only one flying back and forth to Washington. John Root of the Metropolitan YMCA and Deton Brooks flew to the Capitol to meet with Shriver. Shriver then gave the word: the project was not to be funded until it met Daley's approval.

Reenter Julian Levi, Marshall Korshak (5th Ward Committeeman) and others. Lewis Caldwell remembers it this way: "When two immovable objects collide, they work out a compromise."

Ed Berry, then president of the Chicago Urban League, who sat in on some of the meetings, recalled in an interview with the *Defender*: "If we were able to convince Daley of anything, it was the first time."

Another factor, notes Fish (*Black Power/White Control*), was that Senators Jacob Javits, Robert Kennedy, and Joseph Clark, on the day of Daley's acquiescence in Chicago, were holding a public investigation of the Chicago poverty program.

Javits appeared publicly with Jeff Fort and other Blackstone Ranger leaders.

Daley, who feared that the OEO gang experiment would be used against him and the old-line Democratic Party, signed. The program was funded May 31, 1967.

The next move was to hire a director. Daley's solution to most such problems was: get a local man.

TWO's candidate, a New York criminologist-psychologist, was rejected by Deton Brooks.

TWO then set up a blue-ribbon advisory committee, consisting of Dr. Julian Levi (University of Chicago), Dr. Irving Spergel (University of Chicago), Dr. June Tapp (University of Chicago), Dr. Robert Hess (University of Chicago), and Harry Cain (National Institute of Mental Health), Edwin Berry, and Sheppard Kellum (Woodlawn Mental Health Center).

Brooks refused to have anything to do with the committee, saying that it was "incompetent and knew nothing about poverty, the poor, or Woodlawn. ..."

June 28: 'School for crime': An experiment

In late 1965, University of Chicago provost Edward Levi announced a "new major commitment to improving ghetto schools."

The Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) ghetto "school for crime" was just one of those experiments.

The 1967-1968 gang "pilot project" was experimental in the same sense that the Vietnam War was an "experimental project."

A forerunner of the program is told in John Gay's classic play, "The Beggar's Opera," which told about

a London-based school for thieves and pickpockets, with City Hall connections.

But in our story, the connections are to the University of Chicago. And it was City Hall that fought the school for crime.

And who do you think it was that was hired to "monitor" the school for crime?

The University of Chicago, of course.

But that is jumping ahead of our story. First, the school itself.

The program was funded by OEO May 31, 1967. Classes began less than a month later, with TWO and First Presbyterian Church the school sites for the Blackstone Rangers.

The program was set up to bring in 800 youths for "on-the-job-training" for street gang members; the instructors would be gang leaders, with 5th and 6th grade level educations. There were no professional instructors.

The criteria for teaching: "If they were good gang leaders, if they could rise to power in the gang, then they got the top positions?" Senator John McClellan asked of OEO director Bertrand Harding, who responded: "That was the theory of using the [gang] structure."

Students were paid \$45 per week for attending, plus travel allowances; Blackstone Ranger leaders Jeff Fort, Eugene Hairston and other members of the "Main 21" were put on salary: between \$4,000 and \$6,500 a year.

It wasn't the \$11,000 salary that First Presbyterian Church gang controller Chuck LaPaglia made, but at pre-inflationary 1967-68 wages, it was a sizable income. And it was padded: the shakedown of the students was so obvious that even Rev. Fry had to admit it existed, as he did in the June 1968 McClellan investigation.

Fry said he knew the students "contributed" part of their paychecks to the gangs. Asked what they did with the money, Fry answered: "That's their business, not mine. But I have a strong feeling the money was used for broadly humanitarian purposes."

"What he meant by that—what he really meant by that—was that the money was used for drugs, lawyers, bail bond, and guns," commented a *Defender* source.

Several hundred youths were "persuaded" to drop out of school to join the gangster-led "job training" classes.

Wadsworth Upper Grade Center, which had been the site of another University of Chicago "educational experiment," was one of the sources of the bodies the Blackstone Rangers used to fill their classrooms.

Wadsworth principal Yakir W. Korey, in congressional testimony, told part of the story of the rough

gang-herding of his students into the OEO "experimental education" project.

More than any other single individual, it was Winston Moore who initiated the McClellan investigation of the OEO pilot project.

Moore had made enemies for his effort, and his enemies didn't forget it.

It was Winston Moore who, as superintendent of Cook County jail, had spirited Blackstone Ranger gang leader George (Watusi) Rose out of Chicago.

In a recent interview with the *Defender*, Moore commented on the OEO school: "Kids had to join in order to survive. There was nothing positive in that thing. It really was a school for crime."

Of the program, Moore had testified before Congress: "If they meant to train these kids to go into organized crime, then it was very effective. These gangs are just set up for selling dope, or prostitution, and any other thing that will make a buck...."

"These kids were told to drop out [of public school] and join the training classes, or else," continued Moore. "The kids knew what the 'or else' meant...."

According to testimony presented by the Chicago Commission on Youth Welfare, gang crime doubled during the OEO gang experiment. And fraud within the program increased day by day: a later sampling of records showed that most of the attendance records and paychecks were forged.

And the education? Everett McCleary, 20, who was paid \$7,000 a year to supervise instruction, testified before Congress on the school's curriculum:

McCleary: If there was a problem in the math class, sometimes they would refer to me for help. Maybe they'd ask what two and two was—and I'd tell them, 'four.'

McClellan: Is that a good illustration [of the kind of education that went on]?

McCleary: It's an illustration.

McClellan: Can't you give us a more difficult problem?

McCleary: Three times three is nine.

Police, juvenile investigators, and even the University of Chicago reported that the experimental education consisted of "laying around, smoking pot, gambling, drinking, and cleaning guns."

"It wasn't a formal way of teaching, but [they] did teach them to be good gang members," Winston Moore stated in congressional testimony.

And it was the University of Chicago—well aware of the fraud being perpetrated—that was responsible for providing the OEO the report on their experiment.

July 2: University's of OEO's came under heavy attack

The report was characterized by Senator John McClellan as "not worth fifty cents."

In testimony before the Senate hearings into the OEO gang project, Winston Moore had stated: "The University of Chicago practically wrote the program, so for them to evaluate it would be like me evaluating my own jail [Moore was at that time warden of Cook County jail]."

Acting OEO director Bertrand Harding testified at the June 1968 McClellan hearings that the University of Chicago analysis of the federal government gang "on-the-job-training" project had not been submitted until June, a month after OEO had admitted the experiment had failed and had cut off its funds.

Harding told the Senators: "In retrospect, it [the gang school] should have been shut down in January."

It of course comes as no surprise that the University of Chicago would have been engaged to write the analysis of the project—the University had played a key role in the nurturing of the gangs, and in particular the Blackstone Rangers, at every step.

Professor Irving Spergel, a University sociologist, had had a keen interest in the gangs since at least 1963, when he wrote "A Community Study, East Woodlawn: Problems, Programs, Proposals." It was from East Woodlawn that most of the Blackstone Rangers came.

Professor Spergel was a member of the University-dominated TWO blue-ribbon project director selection committee. Spergel was also a member of the TWO gang project advisory board.

Critics of the OEO gang project insist that Spergel had a key hand in writing the federal project, along with OEO's Jerome Bernstein.

But OEO offered \$80,000 to the University of Chicago to evaluate the success of the gang experiment.

The University was to submit at least three reports: one after four months; another in the eighth month of the gang experiment, and a final report after the project was complete.

The University, however, did not comply with that specification.

A report, however doctored, would have tended to have been critical of the project—and it was the University's objective not to intervene in the experiment,

but rather to see it played out. Professor Spergel had initially asked for not \$80,000, but \$100,000 to do a four-year report of the gang project. The McClellan hearings intervened, however, and the gang experiment was stopped.

At least 18 University staff members participated in the final report to OEO: sociologists, anthropologists, computer specialists, law professors....

By April 1969—almost a year after the experiment was complete—the 260-page report was complete: “What Happened in Woodlawn.”

Heavily biased against the police, City Hall, and sections of the press, the report gives high marks to the moral if not intellectual superiority of the gang leadership over the police.

As the McClellan testimony made clear, the category of “subprofessionals” meant gang leadership. This is how the University of Chicago report evaluated the subprofessionals: “As a group they were young men of unusual leadership capacity, bright, sensitive, articulate, extremely hard-working, and dedicated....”

The report notes also that they were most dedicated to perpetuating the gang structure.

And the police? How does the U. of C. report grade them? As hostile, furious, incompetent, punitive, destructive, suspicious, uncooperative, brutal, harassing....

The University report announces its bias in its introductory remarks: “Despite selection by TWO of *the* [our emphasis] most qualified person available, the Mayor preferred that a city employee be appointed.”

The report does not point out that the University of Chicago had played the key role in selecting the person the Mayor had rejected.

The bulk of the report demonstrates that the University had done some analysis: it had profiled the gang leaders, their backgrounds, political ambitions. They had made their “alienation index” analysis.

The analysis would be useful to the University; the bulk of it would not be included in the report turned over to OEO.

But the report itself whitewashed the experiment, when compared with the testimony of the OEO officials before Congress (the McClellan hearings).

For example, the report comments: “In late fall or early winter of 1967, program emphasis shifted from education to attitude change. The development of specific literacy competence was no longer regarded by professionals as the critical objective....”

We have already seen the nature of the education which was conducted: “Two and two is four; three times three is nine....”

The report acknowledges the fraud against the federal government (forged attendance records, for exam-

ple), but the university did not alert OEO to the violations.

In spite of the pro-experiment bias, some investigator’s observation was incorporated into the University report: “A walk through the classrooms presented a picture of bored and sullen youngsters. No one in authority interacted with them, and they interacted with each other minimally. One classroom had no instructor, a second had an instructor who spent most of the time looking at a newspaper. Half of the students sat doing nothing and the other half interacted minimally with each other.”

Another descriptive report: “It was not unusual to find both trainee and subprofessional motionless, trance-like, deep in a state of torpor.”

Again, a descriptive report: “...M., who was apparently in charge, sat behind one of the desks, looking tired and sullen. The whole situation seemed to approach the bizarre as he sat there motionless, looking down at the desks, and not responding verbally at all to our presence or that of the group around him....”

Descriptive reporting of any type is very rare in the University’s 260-page government financed report. When it is incorporated, the scene described is invariably one of mental stagnation, or the discussion of gang exploits, or the planning of new gang capers.

Though the report stated that the gang experiment had reduced the volume of crime during the year, Commander Griffin (Third District) testified before the McClellan hearings that gang crime had doubled during the gang experiment.

The study admitted, however, that there was “little modification of the pattern of gang warfare among the Rangers and Disciples during the program. At least a fourth of the gang members still carry pistols”—presumably to class, where the University research was conducted.

And how was the program evaluated by the University of Chicago?

The report calls the OEO project “the most genuine and daring experiment of the concept of maximum feasible participation.”

The outcome of the program was that 53 of the students—many of whom had been forced to drop out of public school by the gangs—obtained jobs.

The cost of the job placement was approximately \$12,000 per job. And it was the University of Chicago and U. of C. connected Argonne National Laboratories (along with Westinghouse) that did most of the hiring.

The University of Chicago concludes their report with a warning that their gang experiment enthusiasm is not over: The program “probably succeeded programmatically, but it failed politically—at this time.”

Next issue: politicians and foundations support the gangs.