TO: See Below

FROM: Ed O'Hara, Public Affairs

SUBJECT: Poor People's Campaign Demands

Attached are the major part of the draft responses to PPC demands. If you have any corrections or comment, please call me by 3:30 p.m. today on 5096 or 3143.

cc: Alf Corbett-CAP
Tony Partridge-Civil Rights
John Clark-CAP
Walt Robbins-Civil Rights
Walt Williams-RPP&EE
Tom Cosgrove
Ira Kaye-CAP
Bob Emond-Inspection
Tom Kelly-Inspection
Ken Sparks-PA
Following are draft suggested responses to the demands of the Poor People's Campaign. In some cases, the response involves a stated course of action. In others, a course of action is suggested for consideration because it is not clear whether it would be feasible. The ideas and facts that went into these responses were put forth and discussed in a meeting that included representatives from CAP, General Counsel, Civil Rights, National Councils, Inspection, and RPF&E.

Demand regarding CRAC, involvement of poor in policy making, technical assistance and employment.

The Community Representatives Advisory Council (CRAC) will hold a meeting in the near future and will hold meetings more regularly than in the past. The OEO is conscious that CRAC has not held a meeting for some time. However, it has been undergoing a reorganization so that membership on it will be rotating rather than permanent. Serious consideration will be given to the establishment of CRACs at the regional office and state levels. (Nominations for 16 new members of CRAC have been sent to the White House where they are awaiting approval.)

Technical Assistance: The OEO will take steps to see that poor people are hired as part of state Technical Assistance office staffs. It will also take steps to see that poor people are included as consultants on OEO evaluation teams. Any further suggestions from PPC as to how poor could be involved in technical assistance would be welcome.

Employment: The OEO will make every effort to see that qualified neighborhood workers and other poor are employed at higher levels by CAAs. CAAs will be urged to give primary consideration for professional level positions to poor people who have proven their effectiveness in working with the poor even though they may lack formal education that is often required for such positions.

(The following demands--although presented in two lists--will be numbered consecutively.)

1--Draft regulations on the participation of poverty communities have been prepared and will soon be circulated.

2--We are aware that poor people and poor communities often do not know their rights of appeal in regard to racial or ethnic discrimination, rejection of proposals, and cuts in funding. Steps will be taken to inform these people and communities more thoroughly of their rights and to give them names and addresses of appropriate OEO sources to be contacted.

(more)
on such complaints. OEO must receive reports from the field in order to act. If a complaint is sent to the OEO, it is checked out. But if there is no report, it cannot be investigated.

3--Simplified guidelines that must be followed by the local government under the Green Amendment will be issued to poor people and poverty communities. If a local government fails to designate a CAA or if it designates an agency that fails to fulfill OEO requirements, the OEO can designate an agency that meets the requirements. However, this is an area where the poor have a primary responsibility. Since OEO programs are based on local control, in many cases the poor must stand up and fight for their own rights. Purely local matters cannot be decided at the federal level.

4--Regional offices carry out day-to-day operations on the basis of policy established in Washington. While we have experienced some problems in the past, they have been eliminated and the rights of the poor are being adequately protected.

5--Suggested response: Noting that the interest has been voiced by the PPC, ask the White House to consider supporting the supplemental appropriation.

6--Steps are being taken to see to it that such funds are not turned back to the Treasury again.

7--Although the legislation says the National Advisory Council should be "representative of the public in general," there are no poor people on the council, with the possible exception of an Indian leader. It was suggested that it is a valid demand that poor people be appointed to this council. When the OEO originally submitted names to the White House for the council, the list included poor people. But none was appointed (again with the possible exception of the Indian). It was suggested that since the PPC has specifically raised the point and since it would not involve expenditure of funds, the White House be asked to name poor people to the National Advisory Council.

8--(Listed as no. 1 in the second set of demands) OEO has recently signed a memorandum of agreement on delegation of authority to the Department of Labor. The "prime sponsor" of OEO-delegated employment programs at the local level will be the CAA. When the OEO makes a regular inspection of a local CAA, it will include these delegated employment programs. (A copy of the delegation agreement section on monitoring and evaluation should be attached.)

9--The OEO has no plan for its "future organizational structure." Perhaps this demand could be discussed with PPC to determine what it is aimed at.
10--The OEO is in sympathy with the demand for the activation of a new Economic Opportunity Council which would be totally separate from the OEO, as described in the 1967 amendments. The OEO is eager to work with the White House in the implementation of the amendments. The OEO would support any device to maximize the coordination of all federal resources. It would also support the submission of comment on the role and structure of the EOC from CRAC, NAC, and any other group that has a legitimate interest in the war on poverty.

11--In a situation where a local Community Action Agency is deficient in its involvement of the poor, the OEO usually tries to improve the agency's ability to do its job. When a local CAA and the OEO have invested time, work, and money in getting a program into operation, and when the OEO has invested similar resources, the best course is normally to improve the existing program and, if necessary, replace inadequate program officials. Only in extraordinary situations does the OEO cut off funding for an agency completely. This usually results in a loss of funds, time and interruption of services to the poor. OEO has done this in several situations where it was necessary.

12--Proposal for a Secretary for the Poor. This demand should be addressed to the White House and the Congress.

The following demands were expressed by individuals in the PCC group that visited OEO.

Phyllis Robinson, Providence, demanded that money be given directly to the poor instead of "high agency directors;" that Head Start should have representatives of the poor at all OEO meetings in Washington, D.C., and in the regions.

Response: The OEO is not a program to hand out money to individuals such as the welfare system but is intended to provide services to the poor so they can help themselves. The OEO would be interested in specific proposals as to how representatives of the poor could be included in OEO meetings on Head Start.

2--Etta Horn of a national welfare rights organization, charged the OEO "is supporting" the 1967 Social Security Amendments (P.L. 90-248) through day care centers that would "put mothers into slavery."

Response: The OEO did not support, nor was it asked to support, the 1967 Social Security amendments. However it is aware of the amendments and of their potential effect on poor people. For example, the Legal Services newsletter recently carried an article explaining that the amendments may result in the disqualification of needy children from welfare and the compulsory participation by welfare mothers in work programs, even though (more)
the mothers ought to be with the children at home. The article also explained the rights of welfare recipients under the new legislation. The charge implies OEO favors repressive welfare practices. This is utterly false. Legal Services Programs have filed hundreds of suits challenging welfare laws and provisions that work harshly against the poor and have overturned many of them. Legal Services lawyers from three cities argued before the Supreme Court, May 1 that state welfare residency laws are unconstitutional. If the court finds these laws unconstitutional, it will bring an estimated $140 million to $200 million a year to more than 100,000 and 200,000 poor people. Local Legal Services lawyers have challenged the withdrawal of welfare without a prior hearing; the practice of setting maximum grants that discriminate against large families; welfare searches that harass and invade the privacy of the poor. And they have obtained reversals of 60% of welfare decision cutting clients off public assistance in which hearings were held.

The Social Security amendments require that OEO coordinate day care programs with HEW on the Work Incentive Program, and we will do so.

3--Linda Cusumano, New York City, demanded "preventive medicine" in the ghettos.

Head Start has provided full physical and dental examinations, and treated any deficiencies found, for more than 2,000,000 children in the past three years. It has also referred parents of Head Start children to medical care. OEO has introduced the practice of comprehensive neighborhood health centers in the slums and funded 41 such centers to provide high quality care to ghetto residents.

Linda Cusumano wanted to know how much will be spent on "youth corps programs" this summer, and how much on demonstration programs this year than last.

Some $29 million will be spent by OEO for demonstration programs this year compared with $35 million in fiscal 1967. About $123 million will be spent on Neighborhood Youth Corps programs for 294,000 opportunities this summer.

Linda Cusumano said she has "yet to see poor serving in policy roles" in OEO programs.

The CAA in New York is using neighborhood groups of poor people as delegate agencies to carry out their own programs.
We as representatives of the black, brown and white poor of America, come to the Office of Economic Opportunity with a heavy and bitter heart. We go to other departments of the federal government as spokesmen for the neglected poor of the country because our citizens who live in poverty have been forgotten or never considered by those who administer programs for big business, the large acreage farmer, the skilled worker and others who are part of America's mainstream of plenty.

But OEO was the agency supposedly created especially to serve the poor and to give them the power and the money to speak and to act for themselves. You have failed us. You were to be our spokesman within the federal government, but our needs have gone unspoken. You were to help us take our rightful places as dignified and independent citizens in our communities but our manhood and womanhood have been sold into bondage to local politicians and hostile governors.

Four years ago we had hope. We thought that an Office of Economic Opportunity would provide us a doorway into American society. But OEO became the middleman captured by the myriad of anti-poverty agencies that continued their traditional and abusive ways of dealing with poor people.

We demand that the OEO reorder its priorities so that the consumers of services be involved in the policy making, the technical assistance, and employment levels of those programs which continue to be administered by the agency.
We call on OEO:

1. To issue regulations implementing citizen participation from poverty communities. This must be done without delay to bring the voice of the poor to those chambers where public officials now control OEO programs.

2. To issue and implement a clear and simple appeals procedure that can be understood by the poor.

3. To spell out requirements that will clearly make local politicians responsible for respecting the civil and human rights of the poor. This step is essential in those cases where the local political authority refuses to participate in the CAP program or where the CAP agency is not responsive to the needs of the poor. If these problems exist, poor people must be able to operate their own programs.

4. To establish firm guidelines for the regional offices. Despite new authorities vested in the regional offices Washington officials must not abdicate all responsibility for programs.

5. To publicly support the 75 million summer jobs, the 25 million Head Start supplemental appropriation, and the general 279 million supplemental appropriation.

6. To monitor the budgets of delegate Federal agencies so funds that could be used are not returned to the Treasury. Last year $52 million from the Neighborhood Youth Corps was returned to the Treasury. This must not happen again.
7. To restructure and convene the OEO Citizen Advisory Council and to give the poor stronger and broader representation on this Council. OEO must maintain communication with representatives of the poor and with those private groups concerned with the anti-poverty program.

We further demand of OEO:

1. That all programs delegated by OEO to other Federal agencies contain strong provisions for OEO to monitor and evaluate programs. OEO must set up procedures so that the poor are integral part of all evaluations.

2. That the agency make available a plan for its future organizational structure.

3. That the Economic Opportunity Council be activated and an executive director be appointed (as provided by law) with the concurrence of the Citizens' Advisory Council. OEO must insist that the now fragmented anti-poverty effort of a variety of Federal agencies be coordinated through itself and the EOC. OEO is the symbol of the Federal anti-poverty efforts of all Federal agencies.

4. That programs which do not meet quality standards must be defunded and the funds made available to other groups in the community. Lack of involvement of the poor must be considered prima facie evidence of lack of quality.
TO: Robert Perrin  
FROM: James Williams  

DATE: May 1, 1968

SUBJECT: Explanation and background of the demands of the Poor People's Campaign

Several of the demands presented to the Office of Economic Opportunity by the Poor People's Campaign appear to be fuzzy in their focus, and hence difficult to answer. It is only when the underlying reasons that prompted these specific demands are examined that their meaning can be fully understood. With the invaluable assistance of Dr. Maurice Dawkins, the demands have been clarified and in some instances rephrased to accurately reflect what is really being sought.

The initial demand, though not numbered, is still classifiable as a demand.

"We demand that OEO reorder its priorities so that the consumers of services be involved in the policy making, the technical assistance and employment levels of those programs which continue to be administered by the agency."

If OEO is the governmental agency for delivering services to the poor, then the poor should be in policy making positions at every level of the agency. CRAC should be operative at the national level and further, there should be similar bodies at the regional level and at the district level, whether such district be one state or multi-states. The poor people are aware that it has been several months since a meeting of CRAC has been called.

Technical assistance means that if there are to be consultants, poor people should be utilized whenever the provision of such assistance involves working with poor people. The concept of technical assistance should be expanded to include the expertise of the poor.

On employment, the PPC is asking that the poor be employed in capacities above that of sub-professional or aides in Community Action Agencies. They are asking that people in target areas be utilized on a higher level. What they seek can be described as maximum feasible employment of the poor.

The numbered demands are now discussed.

1. To issue regulations implementing citizen participation from poverty communities. This must be done without delay to bring the voice of the poor to those chambers where public officials now control OEO programs.

Simple rules are asked for telling the poor how they will participate in the operation of the poverty program in their local community. There is a fear among the poor that unless OEO spells out their roles, in language they can understand, they will be at the mercy of unsympathetic city, county or state officials.
2. To issue and implement a clear and simple appeals procedure that can be understood by the poor.

The rights of the poor must be protected in the areas of (1) racial or ethnic discrimination, (2) rejection of proposals, (3) cuts in funds. They are asking for a workable system of appeals, enforced at the local as well as regional and national levels. The demand is for clearly defined channels through which such an appeal has to move, and a method by which Washington headquarters can monitor the system effectively. If the poor have a complaint, a mechanism should be available to them and should not be so constructed that their appeal can not be blocked from reaching the highest level of the agency.

3. To spell out requirements that will clearly make local politicians responsible for respecting the civil and human rights of the poor. This step is essential in those cases where the local political authority refuses to participate in the CAP program or where the CAP agency is not responsive to the needs of the poor. If these problems exist, poor people must be able to operate their own programs.

This demand grows out of the difficulty of understanding the Green Amendment regulations. OEO is asked to issue simplified instructions. The poor people have only limited trust in some of their local politicians and they do not feel that their civil and human rights will be protected in those areas where the political structure is in the driver's seat. They want a simple spelling out of the requirements that must be followed by the political structure in its relationship with the poor. If new 1968 legislation is needed to deal with this problem, the demand in effect is that OEO prepare a draft of an amendment to the EOA. If it can be done under regulatory authority, OEO is asked to issue supplemental regulations where the Poor People's Campaign feels there is a need.

4. To establish firm guidelines for the regional offices. Despite new authorities vested in the regional offices, Washington officials must not abdicate all responsibility for programs.

Regional offices have too much power, so much so that programs such as SWAFCA and CDGM would not have left the ground, if they had to be approved by the region. The poor people point to other, longer established federal agencies and charge that these offices have always reflected local prejudices, and this they want avoided at OEO. They are asking for regional office guidelines that are firm enough so that the rights of the poor are protected in all regions by OEO, Washington headquarters. National Emphasis Programs and demonstrations were cited as those areas in which protection is needed.

5. To publicly support the 75 million dollar supplemental appropriations, the 25 million Head Start supplemental appropriation, and the general 279 million supplemental appropriation.

No further explanation deemed necessary.
6. To monitor the budgets of delegate Federal agencies so funds that could be used are not returned to the Treasury. Last year $52 million from the Neighborhood Youth Corps was returned to the Treasury. This must not happen again.

The demand is that OEO be given tighter control systems over delegated funds and sufficient authority to make certain that the 26 billion dollars in War on Poverty efforts makes maximum effective impact. If OEO does not monitor the use of funds delegated to other agencies, who is to protect the poor? The specific incident cited is the return of NYC money by Labor. Statutory or regulatory assurances are asked that money intended to serve the poor and delegated to other agencies, be closely monitored to accomplish this purpose.

7. To restructure and convene the OEO Citizen Advisory Council and to give the poor stronger and broader representation on this Council. OEO must maintain communication with representatives of the poor and with those private groups concerned with the anti-poverty program.

The National Advisory Committee is the subject of this demand. The poor people know the Council has not met in some time and they want it reconvened. They are also asking that representatives of the poor sit on this council. They are aware of CRAC, but an additional outlet for the voice of the poor is being sought.

We further demand of OEO:

1. That all programs delegated by OEO to other Federal agencies contain strong provisions for OEO to monitor and evaluate programs. OEO must set up procedures so that the poor are an integral part of all evaluations.

A definite relationship exists between this demand and number 1. In addition to monitoring the expenditure of money, OEO should also be concerned with regularly monitoring to make certain the poor are benefitting from the program and involved at all possible levels. A quality-control system is indicated.

2. That the agency make available a plan for its future organizational structure.

OEO has indicated that it has certain organizational problems that prevent it from doing the job it should be doing. The demand is that OEO (1) indicate what it cannot perform as the Poor People's Campaign would like to see it, and (2) prepare a plan whereby structural and organizational changes would make it possible for OEO to more effectively serve the poor.

The implication here is that if additional legislation and action from Congress is necessary that the poor people will go to Congress for action.

3. That the Economic Opportunity Council be activated and an executive director be appointed (as provided by law) with the concurrence of the Citizens' Advisory Council. OEO must insist that the now fragmented
anti-poverty effort of a variety of Federal agencies be coordinated through itself and the EOC. OEO is the symbol of the Federal anti-poverty efforts of all Federal agencies.

Legislation requires that there be an Economic Opportunity Council. In fact, the poor people want to know that it is actively working. They ask that it be activated, with the concurrence of the National Advisory Council. They feel that unless this is done, no one will have the clout to actually coordinate the attack on poverty.

4. That programs which do not meet quality standards must be defunded and the funds made available to other groups in the community. Lack of involvement of the poor must be considered prima facie evidence of lack of quality.

Lack of quality is defined as the lack of involvement of the poor. In any community, if the poor are not involved, the program should be defunded and the funds made available to more representative groups.

The foregoing represents what we believe is an accurate reading of the written demands.

In addition to the demands that were submitted in writing, Dr. Andrew Young verbally added the following.

1. That a cabinet post be established for the head of OEO so that a "Secretary for the Poor" would operate at the same level as the Secretary for Laborers, Farmers, Business, etc. To provide the poor with a voice in the President's cabinet and the power to really implement the plans and fight for the goals of the poor.