

WE WOULD SEEK TO UNIFY A CITY

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I would like to propose the creation of a Cambridge Human Relations Council. My hope is that this council can promote better intergroup relations and a stronger sense of community in Cambridge.

There can be no more urgent task for Cambridge than to contribute to the reconciliation of the deep divisions that threaten to tear apart our country.

By fostering understanding now we can build the foundation for domestic peace in the future. Domestic violence need not be our heritage for decades to come.

I would like to suggest specific goals and objectives for a Cambridge Human Relations Council, but before doing so I would like to offer four general guidelines which I hope may form the basis for a sustained and active organization.

Human relations is not the exclusive concern of one or another political group. A useful function is served by diverse political positions. We are a nation founded upon the principles of tolerance and diversity. The idea behind our council would be to end polarization and bring our residents together. As the Scranton Commission has recently stated in its report to the Nation, "language that offends seldom persuades."

A second principle is that effective community cooperation would be a necessity. Cambridge is a city divided. Academia and ethnic neighborhoods reside together but do not mix as neighbors, the council feuds and feuds, and riots are a regular phenomenon. Knowing that it would be difficult and at times unpopular, we would seek to unify a city.

Thirdly, I suggest that we focus on committees and specific objectives. Enthusiasm and creativity must be channeled into more than just the passivity of concern. It was de Tocqueville that praised the "perpetual restlessness" of the American people. It is not our apathy but our restlessness to which we must look for the strength which we will need in building our community.

Lastly, I feel that a human relations council that focuses only on one particular facet of intergroup relations limits its role too much. To sustain itself our organization should examine all aspects of human relations in our community.

I specifically suggest the formation of six committees that would not talk but act and do.

1. An Ethnic Heritages Committee to formulate the curriculum for an Ethnic Heritages course to be offered in the 1971-1972 school year in the Cambridge schools, both in the Adult Evening Education Program and in the regular school curriculum.

This course could concern itself not only with the positive historical contributions which members of our various ethnic groups have made to our society, but also with that culture and warmth that

that makes a people out of individual persons. What makes our democracy great is our vision of human equality- not the equality to be the same but the equality that springs from our right to be different and yet to be all Americans together.

2. A Community Coordination Committee to serve as a liaison between the Cambridge Human Relations Council and other groups, such as the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination, the eighteen civic organizations of Cambridge, the United States Civil Rights Commission, and the Cambridge City Council. This committee would have the responsibility of keeping the community informed of our activities in the form of news releases and newsletters; serving as a Speakers' Bureau for groups such the scouts, the businessmen's associations, women's clubs, and service clubs, and coordinating efforts with human relations efforts in other surrounding areas. Also, this committee could undertake to distribute copies of the Kerner Commission and Scranton Commission Reports.

3. An Education Committee to work with the Cambridge School Committee to include curricula reflective of our rich ethnic heritage in Cambridge. One small but perhaps significant idea is

to ask that the school libraries subscribe to such newspapers

as the ^{Bay State} ~~Boston~~ Banner, La Notizia, the Jewish Advocate, the Irish World, the Armenian Hairenik, the Polish Gazette, the Lithuanian Kileivis, the Portuguese Quarterly, the American Slav, and the Hellenic Chronicle. Another would be to organize in service training for administration, faculty, and students in the area of human relations.

4. A Drug Abuse Committee to seek to open up the hospitals in Cambridge to drug users and seek better medical care for users. Hopefully this committee would be the already functioning Mayor's Advisory Committee on Drug Abuse and would work closely with Cambridge Community Services and the Sanctuary.

5. A Program Committee to organize regular public meetings with speakers. Such meetings can serve a valuable purpose in promoting ideas and discussion. They also could serve as the glue to bond together the various committees. I would suggest that only two or three programs per year be given. This would focus the council's efforts on committee work and minimize hot air.

6. A Legislative Action Committee to formulate a human relations

ordinance to the Cambridge City Council. This ordinance could set up the council or a commission with legal standing and legal powers. First this committee would have to study the ordinances which have been passed in other local municipalities, such as Boston, Lexington, Amherst, New Bedford, Arlington, Newton, Springfield, Worcester, Framingham, Marblehead, and Brookline. An invitation is now made to the solicitor and the city councilors of Cambridge to join in the work of this Legislative Action Committee. It should also be made clear that participation of members of the School Committee and the local police force is especially welcomed and desired. The state legislature has directed the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination to form local commissions.

Local municipalities sometimes legitimately resent being told what to do by the "long arm" of the federal or state government. Cambridge knows best how to solve Cambridge's problems and the formation of a local commission will afford us that opportunity.

An organizational meeting of the Cambridge Human Relations Council will be held at Comstock Hall, 130 Walker Street, in the Radcliffe Quadrangle, ^{Sunday} ~~Monday~~ evening, October ¹⁸ ~~19~~ at 7:30. ~~THIS~~

This meeting will organize the group. I suggest that we elect a Board of Directors, three in number, which would then appoint chairmen or chairwomen for the six committees. The meeting could then break up into committees, in six different rooms. Hopefully this meeting could be a short one but formalize the group's structure.

I ask that all concerned citizens of Cambridge join together in this effort to build our community, to renew understanding and reconcile differences. Our common decency as Americans can serve as our guide to bring us back from the abyss of violence to which we draw near. Tolerance can and must re-emerge from our common humanity and our shared aspirations as Americans.

It was William Hazlitt who told us years ago, "Man is the only animal which both laughs and weeps, for he is the only animal which is struck by the difference between the way things are and the way they might be."

I call upon Cambridge to become the community it might be, a place free from bigotry and intolerance, and a home for people.

244

Cambridge Human
Relations Council