

HOUSE PEOPLE, NOT PROFITS

GRASS ROOTS, a new land use movement in the Palo Alto Area, held its first demonstration last Monday, protesting the planned erection of a financial office center in the Stanford Industrial Park, on Stanford University land. Two hundred people, mostly students from Stanford and from local high schools, marched to the site on which ~~The~~ Dillingham Corporation plans to build two high-rise office buildings and eventually a convention hotel. The demonstration, led by members of the "Hard Fife and Drum Core" (dressed in red tunics emblazoned with a coiled rattlesnake and the slogan "Don't tread on me!"), ended with a brief rally and picket at the Dillingham site, just down the Page Mill expressway from the scene of militant street demonstrations staged last May against the sale and continuance of counterinsurgency research at SRI.

Grass Roots was formed in December, drawing together radicals from the April Third Movement (which organized the anti-SRI struggle) and a number of people recently radicalized by the media discovery of the "national ecology crisis." Grass Roots hopes to bring an anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist perspective to the "ecology movement," and projects a popular community-based movement ~~developing~~ demanding large-scale construction of low-income housing in the Palo Alto Area. Grass Roots members explain the "ecology crisis" and the local housing shortage as part and parcel of the same system which placed us in Vietnam. Many Grass Roots members see the land use movement as part of a long range effort to take Santa Clara County out of the Vietnam War--and future Wars.

ECOLOGY--The San Francisco Bay Area, like most other metropolitan areas, is facing a rapid rise in air and water pollution. Open space is rapidly disappearing. In the Palo Alto area, Stanford University owns most of the open space, at least 6000 acres. Consequently, when Stanford announced plans to expand the Stanford Industrial Park into the Coyote Hill Area--a popular

wilderness picnic spot for local residents--area conservation groups reacted angrily. In addition to destroying a scenic spot easily accessible to local citizens, the expanded industrial park promised to add to the local housing shortage, increase traffic in the area, and aggravate air pollution and other ecological problems. Stanford is going ahead with the Coyote Hill development, and has, in addition, okayed the Dillingham-sponsored "Palo Alto Square," the first of a series of new high-rises which should transform suburban Palo Alto into an urban center in its own right.

Grass Roots suggests that the Dillingham and Coyote Hill developments are designed to produce profits--not to serve the people of the area. In fact, the projects are expected to worsen condition for all local residents. In opposing both developments, Grass Roots is calling for land policies which relate to people's needs and to the conservation of the environment.

HOUSINGZ-Santa Clara County--with its economy centered in "defense"--is perhaps the fastest growing metropolitan area in the country. San Mateo County, the other county in the Palo Alto area, is also growing rapidly. The massive influx of people, couple with war-induced tight money, has created an extreme shortage of housing. Rents have risen, people live in crowded and substandard quarters, and low-income Peninsula workers are forced to drive long distances from home to work (increasing traffic and smog). As usual, the pinch is felt tightest by working people--especially black and Chicano. Community groups in the area have recently begun to demand decent housing; in fact, black families recently erected a tent city in downtown San Mateo. Local agencies are either incapable or unwilling to begin to deal with the problem.

Grass Roots holds Stanford University and its land development policies (and the war) responsible for much of the housing shortage. Stanford, as an employer with eight thousand employees, a school with twelve thousand students, and a landlord for corporation which employ over ~~XX~~ twenty thousand, has created



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a housing need at least five thousand units more than currently available in the adjacent area. Hitherto Stanford has made its land available to industry, but has only provided land for some faculty housing, a few high-income housing developments, and dormitories for half its student body. Since Stanford owns most of the undeveloped land in the area, Grass Roots believes that Stanford should donate its land and financial resources to insuring the construction of several thousand units of high-quality, low-income, community-controlled housing. Presently, Stanford treats its land as a limited, long-range income-producing asset, and is unwilling to undertake large-scale unprofitable low-income housing development. The ruling class left arm, the Urban Coalition, is expected to arrange for the development of four hundred low income housing units on Stanford land, but Grass Roots considers this progress grossly insufficient.

Furthermore, the Coyote Hill and Dillingham projects are eventually expected to bring a total of five or six thousand people into the immediate area. (Though two-thirds of these people will not need low-income housing, their presence in the housing market will affect those in worse economic straits.) As part of its program for low-income housing projects, Grass Roots is opposing the industrial development which is expected to increase the housing problem.

DEFENSE INDUSTRY--The electronics empire which grew up out of ~~XXX~~ Stanford ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ Electrical Engineering Department after World War II now has blossomed throughout Santa Clara County. In addition to the Stanford Research Institute (which was recently severed from the University despite Movement attempts to control SRI research) and Lockheed (which employs over 20,000 in Sunnyvale and many more in the Stanford Industrial Park), hundreds of firms have grown up out of Stanford. Hewlett-Packard (of/Defense ~~XXXXXXXX~~ Assistant Secretary David Packard), Varian Associates, and Watkins-Johnson, are three of the largest of the many firms headquartered in the Stanford Industrial Park, on Stanford land. Palo Alto Square ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ and Coyote Hill are actually projected additions to the eight

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hundred acre industrial "park." The April Third Movement, as well as the local November Moratorium activities, focused on the local "military-industrial complex," and Grass Roots hopes to do the same by opposing further development.

The Grass Roots analysis, still very rough, was presented at an auditorium-packed forum January 7, and will be presented, in more detail, in a pamphlet to be published at the end of January. It is easy to attack the consequences of a system based on the concentration of wealth and power, priorities based upon profit, and solutions which sanctify corporate and private property. And it is similarly easy to prescribe utopian solutions ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ of well-planned socialism or communism. Grass Roots is having a great deal of difficulty, however, presenting a transitional program which speaks to all the questions with which it is immediately concerned. The new organization has been attacked by a number of local radicals with a working-class orientation because its anti-industrialization campaign may deny working people jobs--possibly while using the political power of the upper-middle-class seeking to conserve its "high-quality" environment. It is a basic contradiction of capitalism--that imperialism, waste production, and ecological disarray are the only ways in which the economy can expand. Nevertheless, a movement which seeks to keep people out of the area or prevents job-creation must reconsider its goals. Grass roots will probably move toward selective opposition to industrial development, with the understanding that housing and ecological planning are pre-requisites to any new development.

A more satisfactory solution to his dilemma must be found if Grass Roots is to provide radical or revolutionary direction to the growing ecology movement.