

PEOPLE'S DEFENSE COMMITTEE

Statement of Purpose
to
Common Council, City of Detroit
August 5, 1970

We would like to begin by expressing our appreciation to Councilman Ravitz for bringing the matter of Balduck Park to the Council and the city of Detroit.

The People's Defense Committee was formed immediately after the Balduck Park incident by those victimized by police in this incident. The recent attacks on youth by the Detroit Police Department, initially racial in nature, have now developed to include cultural discrimination against youth. This pattern is evident not only in Detroit but across the nation. In a society claiming to be the finest in the world, we are faced with ecological dilemmas (i.e. pollution in the atmosphere, water, and our food), overpopulation, racism, cultural differences, millions of dollars wasted on moon shots and wars when there is much that needs to be done here in our country. Unemployment has reached a level where parents are losing their jobs; obviously there are no jobs for young people. The parks are the only place young people have to get together. The notion of "hard-core juveniles" is absurd. It is pointless for you, the Common Council and the City of Detroit, to ^{attempt} ~~permit~~ the solution of these frustrations in our society by ^{permitting the police to} ~~savagely and brutally attack~~ those black and white people who feel these frustrations on a very real level.

In view of the above, the People's Defense Committee aims to provide adequate legal defense for all of us victimized by these attacks. Further, we are united to deal resolutely with future attacks. We invite all people in the community to become active participants to insure that the above needs be met.

Concretely we will undertake to:

- 1) conduct an investigation of the police actions involved, and file complaints through those channels available to us, including the Citizen's Complaint Bureau (several complaints have been filed already regarding this incident).
- 2) insure that necessary action be taken against those officers who may be found guilty of illegal actions, including criminal prosecution.
- 3) set up an on-going forum for discussion between those residents whose alleged complaints led to the early closing of the park (and the police involvement there) and the youth in the community who use the park.
- 4) to urge our friends not to antagonize area residents, i.e. littering and excessive noise.
- 5) to provide legal defense for those victimized by the police attacks

The People's Defense Committee also has certain demands, necessary in view of the brutality used by the police. These demands are as follows:

- 1) Knowing the history of the Citizen's Complaint Boards across the country and other organizations who perform a similar function, it is unlikely that Detroit's CCB can come to an impartial decision concerning the complaints filed against the police. In view of Commissioner Murphy's remarks about the Detroit Police Department (i.e. they are the finest in the nation, and are self-disciplined to the extent that officers used only reasonable force), this unlikelihood is all the more clear. Therefore, we demand that a thorough investigation be made by an impartial panel of citizens.
- 2) In view of the clearly illegal and arbitrary nature of the arrests made at Balduck Park and the fact that most of these arrests were made outside the park while people were attempting to comply with police orders, we demand that all charges against defendants be dropped.
- 3) In view of the actions of the TMU police at Balduck, we demand that the training given them be thoroughly investigated. Is the specific aim of their training to chase people into a fence and thereby entrap them, to chase them for a matter of blocks and after catching them, issue loitering tickets, or to beat people severely and then charge them with felonious assault?

Because this incident follows a recurrent pattern of brutality by police -- Cass Park, Stoney Creek, Kensington State Park, Angel Park, Lakewood Park, East Detroit and now Balduck-- there is an urgent need to discuss and take action upon these issues immediately.

We are available at anytime after this hearing to meet with those interested. At this time, we have no phone. Messages can be left with the Ad Hoc Action Committee at 872-2828.

Sgt. W. W. W. W.
#21