AT MASS RALLY

New Committee Formed by Poor

By Jim Bradshaw
Advertiser Staff Reporter

Over 1,000 representatives of the poor from six Southeast Louisiana parishes met Friday night in the Lafayette Municipal Auditorium to protest the discrimination of Acadiana Neuf, Inc., and to adopt a proposal to form a Congress of the Poor in Acadiana.

The group urged the state to seek funds for Operation Head Start and Sweet Potato Alert, programs previously administered by Acadiana Neuf, through a single-purpose agency.

Rev. Rev. J. Paul, assistant pastor of St. Paul's Catholic Church in Lafayette, told the group he sought funds directly from the regional Office of Economic Opportunity in Austin, Tex.

Acadiana Neuf, the local community action agency which handles programs under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, voted itself out of existence Dec. 31 amid a controversy over the composition of its board of directors.

The OEO, however, said disbanding of Acadiana Neuf would be unfeasible.

Parish Committees: The meeting was called Friday by chairmen of parish advisory committees in Acadiana Neuf to appeal for continuance of the agency's poverty programs and to seek a stronger voice for the poor in forming policies of the agency.

J. Carlisle James, presidents of the Lafayette advisory committee and president of the Southern Consumers Education Foundation, suggested the Congress of the Poor to replace the advisory committees one which the latter would be dissolved.

The Congress, as he outlined it, would be composed of the members of the Acadiana Neuf board elected by poor women and minority groups and presidents of parish advisory committees to continue programs for the six parishes.

Lafayette, Vermilion, Iberia, St. Martin and Acadia parishes were represented by Acadiana Neuf.

Rev. A. J. McKeight, C.Ss.R., of Rochester, was a member of the Acadiana Neuf board of directors, and a member of the Acadiana Neuf board of directors, was a member of the Acadiana Neuf board of directors. He formally proposed the Congress, unanimously endorsed by the gathering.

The Congress of the Poor was not mentioned. It seems that either the advisory committees were abolished or the advisory committees were disbanded. The Congress will perform the same functions as the present committees.

If the advisory committees are abolished, the Congress will perform the functions of the present committees. If the advisory committees are abolished, the Congress will perform the functions of the present committees. It will not be abolished.

Fahedzki said: "No longer can we stand by and watch the politicians run the poverty program into the ground." He continued: "We must take action. The people must stop the program in Washington if necessary, to demand immediate funding by a single purpose agency of Operation Head Start and Sweet Potato Alert.

"The people are afraid of the advisory committees. They are afraid of the voice of the people," he said.

Operation Head Start is a pre-school educational program administered by Acadiana Neuf. Sweet Potato Alert is an educational program of the Grand Marie Vegetable Producers Cooperative. It is administered by the Acadiana Neuf directors.

Dr. James C. Oliver, president of Acadiana Neuf, outlined the origins of the anti-poverty group and what it has done to improve its situation.

The agency was established through the OEO as a means of fighting the poverty in the greater New Orleans area.

Original head members of the agency, from various parishes, were those in charge of the continuation of the council of the poor and minority groups by parish advisory committees. The board, now composed of 14 representatives of public agencies and 11 representative of the poor and minority groups.

Reneging Acadiana Neuf was directed by O Jones by the OEO to further reorganize its board of directors.

Herbert L. Tyson, district supervisor of the Arkansas-Louisiana regional office of the OEO in Austin, at that time, wrote to the OEO director, explaining the reorganization.

"After conducting a thorough investigation into the operation of Acadiana Neuf, Inc.," Tyson said, reviewing the board structure and the past performance of the Board of Directors, we have come to the inescapable conclusion that Acadiana Neuf is to continue as a representative agency for the Office of Economic Opportunity in the War on Poverty, the Board must be reorganized in such a manner as to make it more responsive to the needs of the poor.

The investigation referred to by Tyson came after a request by the representative of the minorities and poor on the local board, as they felt they did not have sufficient jurisdiction over the administration of projects of Acadiana Neuf.

The Acadiana Neuf board scheduled several meetings to consider reorganization but did not reach an agreement on a workable structure. It instead voted itself out of existence, leaving the计划 of Operation Head Start and Sweet Potato Alert up in the air.

Also speaking at the rally was Rev. James Guidry, chairman of Operation Head Start, and Joseph Marshburn, 7th District supervisor of the OEO.

Rev. James Jackson of New Iberia urged continuance of the parish advisory committees.

Listed on the program but not present was Rep. Edward Edwards, representative of the 7th Congressional District, Master of ceremonies occupied by Rev. Bryant, an Opelousas minister, and said he had conferred with Edwards and that the representative and he had previous commitments.

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