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It's not so much fun to go home again—

As the Blacks Move In, The Ethnics Move Out

By PAUL WILKES

THE signs were there, all right. The little photography studio on the corner of Harvey and 116th Street, where I had looked at the latest brides, their lips retouched deep red and eyebrows dark, was now a karate and judo school. A storefront church, Pilgrim Rest B. C., was on 93d Street near Dickens. Protective grates guarded the front of Rosenbluth's, our local clothing store, whose recorded Santa Claus laugh had scared the patched corduroy pants right off me as a youngster. A public housing project rose from the mud. And in the streets there was a stillness.

As I drove back through my old neighborhood on the East Side of Cleveland last month, there was so little noise. No horns. At 8 o'clock in the evening, there were few cars on the street. There must have been more people walking around, but I remember only a handful at well-lit intersections.

There had been no dinner served on the flight to Cleveland, and as I turned onto Forest Avenue I thought it was just as well. There would be a pot of beef soup bubbling on the stove and huge lengths of garlic-spiced *kolbasz*, the soul food of my ethnic group, the Slovaks. Over such food a son could talk more easily with his father. Over such food it would be more comfortable to talk about the crime that appears to be sweeping this, the peaceful and benign neighborhood where I spent my first 18 years. With hunks of rye bread in our hands and caraway seeds falling softly to the table, we could even talk about *them*, the new immigrants, the blacks who had broken the barrier and swept into this formerly homogeneous area of Cleveland. As the conversation began, though, it was embarrassing for me, always previously eager to shuck the ethnic business and a blue-collar background, to start asking questions about the family and the old neighborhood only because an idea had come to mind and an article had been assigned.

MY father—his family name, Vilk, already Americanized to Wilkes—came to Cleveland with my mother and six brothers and sisters a year before I was born in 1938. They left an area that would soon stand for white poverty—Appalachia—and came to one where other Slovaks years before had found work in the factories that spread from the Cuyahoga River up the gentle slopes of streets like Kinsman, Union, Woodland and Buckeye.

They soon bought a house that "wasn't much," my father explained through a wad of Havana Blossom chewing tobacco that remains virtually a part of his anatomy. "There wasn't any sheeting beneath the siding, the floors were wavy, but to your mother it was a mansion." The purchase price was $4,000 and the monthly payments about $35, a third of my father's wages with the W.P.A.

Living on Forest Avenue after the war and through the first half of the nineteen-fifties surely fulfilled all the dreams of the Slovak and Hungarian immigrants and their offspring. There was regular work nearby, the brick streets were clean, lawns were mowed and—except for some home-grown hooligans who might beat you up—it was safe. Blacks? Sure, we knew about blacks. They were a growing mass of look-alikes who flooded in after the war to produce fantastic basketball teams at East Tech. They lived on the crumbling rim of the downtown area seemingly content to wallow in their poverty. They were at once out of mind and a dull pain that would

Forest Avenue on Cleveland's East Side. For years the answer to the dreams of Slovak blue-collar workers, it is now a mecca for blacks fleeing the ghetto.

PAUL WILKES, a freelance writer, has just completed a young people's novel on black-ethnic problems.

To the residents of Forest Avenue, the great problems are no longer far away; they're on the doorstep

surely trouble us more in days to come.

For the Slovaks, the center of life was St. Benedict's Church, just four blocks from my house, the place where education, religion and social life peacefully coexisted. When asked where I lived in Cleveland, the response was never the East Side, never the 29th Ward. I lived in St. Benedict's Parish.

In its neighborhood of modest older homes the new St. Benedict's Church, completed 17 years ago, is something of a shock. It is a Byzantine mammoth, built at a cost of a million dollars by a blue-collar congregation that raised more than its share of children. As I rang the bell at the parish-house door, I could hear the chimes within, a long, majestic carillon whose frequent

Mrs. Lorainne Gibson, whose family was the first black one in the neighborhood: "We don't want this neighborhood all black; we have an investment to protect."

use would drive any but those with a Higher Calling right up the wall.

The pastor, Father Michael Jasko, hasn't changed much over the years. He is 65 now, his hair still regally silver, his voice nasal and high. As he began to talk about his parish, it was obviously painful. The glory that was St. Benedict's, the optimism that had built a church with a seating capacity of 1,100, had faded.

"We had 2,000 families and 8,000 souls when you were here," he began. "Now it's 1,000 families and 3,000 souls, and most of them are pensioners. We stopped the Canteen [a weekly dance for teen-agers] 10 years ago and hoped to reopen it, but never did. We made $45,000 in a big year at the bazaar; last year we got $24,000. Novenas and other night-time services have been stopped. The old ladies of the church were getting beaten and robbed on their way to early mass, so we stopped those. Now the first mass is at 7 o'clock, except in the summer when we have the 5:30. Early this year, we're starting a drive to pay off the $95,000 owing on the church. If we don't do it now, we'll never be able to.

"We had a lot of trouble with school children being beaten, in fact the entire baseball team and their coaches were overrun by a gang of 30. I guess you heard about the eighth-grade girl who was raped by four boys from Audubon." I had, and Audubon, a public junior high school now almost entirely black though surrounded by a predominantly white neighborhood, was the reason given by many people for the old neighborhood's current state. "We stopped most of the problem by starting school a half hour before Audubon and letting out a half hour before them. The children can be safely home before they get out.

"The solution," the pastor said more than once, "is more police protection. My duty in these troubled times is to encourage the souls under my direction that we are in a changing world. I never mention 'black' from the pulpit, but I always talk about accepting *them*. No, we haven't visited the homes of these new people to ask them to join. They know about the church; they hear about it from their neighbors. We have a few blacks who attend." In a neighborhood that is 20 per cent black, with the percentage rising weekly, one Negro family is on the parish rolls.

A recent event had intensified the resentment in the neighborhood: the bludgeon slaying of Joe Toke, who was killed during a holdup at the service station he had run for more than 40 years. Had his murder been mentioned from the pulpit? "No, my own judgment tells me it was best not to mention him," and Father Michael hesitated before saying, with no hint of expression on his face, "I wouldn't want to pinpoint the problem."

St. Benedict's School, which I had attended through the eighth grade, seemed to have changed little—the walls were still painted bland and restful beige and green, and the

John Polasics, a civic-group leader: "We don't want our neighborhood liberated as a slum. And we don't want blacks in our group; we are for the preservation of the nationality way of life."

Mrs. Rose Hrutkai, a housewife: "It's sad when women have to pin their key inside their dress and put their grocery money in their shoes."

Blessed Virgin, who had looked out over us from her second-floor pedestal, was still standing firmly on the writhing serpent, though both he and she had been chipped and gouged over the years. But the appearance was deceptive.

While the 1,100 of us in the student body had been stuffed 50 or 60 to a classroom, there were now only 350 students scattered loosely about the school, and precious space was allotted to an audio-visual room and a library. The student body now includes 25 or 30 non-Catholics—I can't remember a single one in my day—and four blacks.

A lunchroom has been built because even those parents who live only a few blocks away won't allow their children to come home at noon. It is considered too dangerous. A thousand lunches are served free each month, and 400 more go at half price. The total price for those who can pay is 20 cents.

JOE TOKE'S Sunoco station at Buckeye and E. 111th is one you could easily pass by: nothing fancy, no spinning aluminum or Dayglo disks, no posters proclaiming free glasses or soda pop. But for the neighborhood people there was always Joe, eternally growing bald, a taciturn man whose stern look was a veneer over a heart of gold. His hydraulic lift could be used without charge, credit was extended without a raised eyebrow, kids' bicycle tires were cheerfully filled with free air. Joe had been warned that the neighborhood was changing, that five merchants or property owners had been killed during holdups in the last few years. His response was, "Who would want to hurt me? Anyhow, they can take the money, I'll earn some more."

That night two weeks earlier Marcella Toke had supper on the stove in the simple apartment, made uncomfortably warm by an oil burner in the middle of the living room floor. She saw the lights going out in the gas station next door, but began to wonder what had happened when Joe didn't appear. She found her husband in a pool of blood in the station. His eyes were open, and Marcella Toke thought at first that he was looking at her. His tire gauge had deflected a bullet, but his skull had been crushed in a remorseless beating.

"To people around here, Joe was a fixture, the honest businessman who had made it by hard work," his widow said. "We all knew the neighborhood was changing, but then this. . . . I think of leaving the neighborhood now, but where would I go? Everything I know is here. I just want those killers found, and I want them to get their due."

Each month the parishioners at St. Benedict's

receive a copy of The Post, a paper put out by the church's Catholic War Veterans. Frank Stipkala, a 38-year-old bachelor, writes many of the stories and editorials, and he is proud to describe himself as a "superhawk and ultraconservative." Campus protest marches, such pop singers as Janis Joplin, new liturgy and liberal Senators of the Kennedy and Church sort have all drawn his stern rebukes. Frank's rhetoric is still hard to take, but his concern for his nationality group and his love for the neighborhood were far more significant in our conversation.

Frank is an efficient man; he had outlined some things he wanted to tell me. A telephone booth on the corner of his street had been damaged so often that it was removed. A mail box had been burglarized on the day Social Security checks were to come. A doctor had installed a peep hole in his door and had gone to irregular office hours to thwart robbers. A mentally retarded boy whose joy was a paper route had to give it up after his collections were stolen and his papers thrown into the street. Somody's Delicatessen closed between 2:30 and 4 each afternoon to avoid harassment from the Audubon students.

"In everything I've told you," he said, "I've not once mentioned race. It isn't race; it's law and order. We Slovaks are too trusting, too honest, too open. There was never trouble here just because blacks moved in. In Murray Hill, the Italians told the blacks they would kill any who dared to move in. In Sowinski Park, the Polish pointed shotguns at them. That is not our way of life, but look what we are reaping now. Many people thought this neighborhood was a fortress,

Mrs. Ollie Slay, a hotel maid: "Talk about law and order—yes, sir, I'm for law and order. You can put me down as in love with the police."

that we would never have trouble, but how we kidded ourselves. The streets are empty because people are afraid to go out and those that must go out are prey.

"We didn't even know the Hungarians in our neighborhood, and we certainly weren't prejudiced against them. Slovaks come from a country that was a collection of small villages; there was no such a thing as national spirit. Here in America, the center was the church, and our people did everything within that church. The

Mrs. Mary Owing, a housewife: "The air is so fresh, the birds are chirping and I feel like I'm in paradise."

Slovaks have been occupied before, by Russians and Germans, by the Hungarians, and now we are being occupied by the robber, the rapist, the murderer. But this is by far harder to live with, the unknowingness of it all. I see two solutions to help the neighborhood; one is very short-term, the other long: Post a policeman every 150 feet to start. Then go to work on the sociological problems like giving these people a better education."

Frank's sister Ethel stopped by, as she often does. She lived on Manor, several blocks away, and had just sold her house at a $4,000 loss. She planned to move to the suburbs with her husband, a teacher, and their children. She flicked off her knitted cap, and—though she has a son ready to graduate from high school—looked like the lovely, shy, dark-haired girl she was 20 years ago. "One of the turning points for me was when I heard people were buying guns. I asked some of the women on the block and found three of them—just like that—who carry guns in their purses. Imagine, women who have never fired a gun in their lives carry one to go to the Pick 'n' Pay."

MY next stop was at Bill's Grocery, the "corner store" for Forest Avenue and the most crowded store I have ever seen. Bill carries thread, dye, fruit, cough syrup, kites, canned goods, boiled ham, hand-dipped ice cream, socks, two brands of prophylactics (lubricated and plain—both good sellers, he admits) and now items required by his new clientele—canned okra and Jiffy corn-meal mix. He has had some call for chitterlings, but can't bring himself to stock them.

Bill Blissman never married, and it became obvious in our conversation that if he had something, someone to go to, he would close up.

Bill smiles a lot these days. He has been fitted with a good set of uppers and it's a good smile, but beneath all that, he is afraid: "I used to stay open until 8 or so, now I close at 6. I keep the door locked most of the day and look through the window to see if I want to let the person in. Three of them drove up in a car the other day, and I was happy I had the door locked." Bill can see out reasonably well, but seeing in through his window and the labyrinth of key chains, suckers, Kits candy, Dark Shadows Bubble Gum and novelties is impossible.

Bill's complaint was familiar. Things were bad before Mayor Stokes, a black, was elected, but since his election, the situation in the neighborhood had quickly become untenable. Stokes is responsible for encouraging blacks to come up from the South and get on Cleveland's welfare and crime rolls. Stokes has allowed a new permissiveness. The blacks are cocky because one of their own is downtown. It doesn't matter that crime has risen in cities with white mayors. In Cleveland, in the old neighborhood, it is largely Stokes's fault.

Bill and members of my own family had trouble remembering people my age who grew up in the neighborhood and were still there. Joe Kolenic, my buddy through St. Benedict's and Cathedral Latin School, had married and lived in the neighborhood until a few years ago, when, like all of our contemporaries who stayed in Cleveland, he joined the migration to the suburbs. Joe and his wife, Shirley, chose a tri-level tract house in Euclid.

We were sitting in their recreation room, where the Kolenics spend most of their time. Its floor is covered with indoor-outdoor carpeting, and there is a huge color television set and black imitation-leather furniture. Joe has gotten just a little pudgy over the years, but as we talked I saw him as a lean and physically mature eighth grader on the St. Benedict's defensive line. He happily admits to being the stereotype young husband. He wants a safe home for his wife and children, one that he is buying, not

Frank Stipkala, active in the parish Catholic War Veterans: "We Slovaks are too trusting . . . the Italians told the blacks they would kill any who moved in . . . That is not our way of life, but look what we are reaping now."

renting; a steady job; a winning season for the Browns or Indians, and a good local golf course.

Joe, an accountant, was asked in 1967 to trade his white shirt for khaki and go down into the Hough area with his National Guard unit to quell the disturbance. "You remember our football games at Patrick Henry field; that was a nice neighborhood. And there we were with guns in our arms stepping over garbage in the streets, watching 6- and 7-year-old kids running around in the middle of the night. It was a horror show. Our city. I wasn't a racist then and I'm not one now. But that time in Hough leaves its impression. To be honest, I didn't want to face that possibility every day in the neighborhood, so I left. But I'm not against the blacks. Hough taught me they need an education to help them help themselves. Back in the neighborhood we

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New York Times photographs by GEORGE TAMES

As the blacks move in—

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thought they'd never get across 93d or in from Woodland Hills Park. The dam broke there; it can happen anyplace."

William Ternansky has taught at my high school, Cathedral Latin, for 37 years. His remaining hair is now more gray than black, but otherwise he had changed little since I graduated from Latin in 1956. He still wore a nondescript suit, a V-neck sleeveless sweater beneath, and had a bunch of papers clutched to his chest. He smiled when I told him who I was and why I had come. He remembered me and he smiled—and for both I was immediately happy.

"The neighborhood lived by the Christian ethic of love thy neighbor," he began, "and that pales at the beginning of wrongdoing. The neighborhood is a new ghetto of fear. But for now it is a defensive fear, not an antagonistic fear that ethnic kids have, and that is what is so paralyzing. There is nothing to do but hide and shudder and withdraw with this kind of fear."

Rose Hrutkai is a strong-minded, strong-willed woman of Hungarian stock. She once discouraged a potential robber by going after a broom when he advanced toward her. When real estate agents call—they have been plaguing the neighborhood with panicky lines like "Sell while you can still get your money out"—Rose Hrutkai tells them off. Her house, down the street from mine, is in mint condition, a white double-decker with green trim that looks as though it goes through the weekly wash. Rose Hrutkai is boiling mad at what's happening, so angry she's going to stay in the neighborhood.

Rose sat in her living room in a shapeless cotton dress that didn't dare wrinkle. On her carpeted floor were a half dozen smaller rugs that protected her larger one.

"My husband is a maintenance man, and we've scrimped through all these years, raised two daughters, sent them to Catholic schools and paid off the $15,500 the house cost," she said. "That's about all we could get out of it if we sold it, because we would have to give points so the new people could get the down-payment money. I love this neighborhood, my garden; everything I have is here. My husband will be retiring soon, and we can't take on house payments. And what could we get for $15,500? A tarpaper shack, maybe. Every day you hear about a lady having her purse snatched, a house being broken into. It's that rough stuff coming up from the South. They drive up in a fancy car and even steal bags of groceries out of women's hands. It's sad when women have to pin their key inside their dress and put their grocery money in their shoes."

Her daughter, Mrs. Gloria Town, joined the conversation. Girls Gloria's age — middle twenties—were once commonplace on Forest Avenue, living upstairs in their parents' homes. Now they are a rarity. "We just couldn't face $250 a month in house payments," Gloria said. "I didn't want to live here, but listen, my husband isn't a $15,000-a-year man, not a $10,000-a-year man. I work, too. And we barely make the payments on our car and keep eating. We really wonder if we can ever afford kids. It's tough to just make ends meet, and then the neighborhood has to turn into a jungle. I hate to leave the house any more. But who wants to hear the complaints of the little American? The rich have power, the poor get attention. But we got nobody."

Her mother added: "I've got nothing against the colored that are moving in as long as they live the way we do. But so many of them are so lazy. The houses need paint, the lawns need cutting."

THERE had been peeling paint before and scrubby lawns. But in earlier years that was the extent of the neighborhood's blight—a few unkempt houses for a few years. Now the people of the neighborhood see it going downhill. These houses were built 50 to 75 years ago in the tradition of Middle Europe, with huge, sloping roofs for the mountain snowfalls that would never come to Cleveland. There were a few fine touches: porch columns might have a scroll on top and bottom or a worked portion in the middle. Leaded glass graced living room windows. Not elegant homes, but big, substantial, ready to house families with many children. That was the appeal to people like my parents and those who had settled here directly from the "Old Country." What appeal do they have to the new immigrants, the people who were alternately received and cursed by the neighborhood?

"At our old place down on 81st and Kinsman, I'd get up in the morning and the smoke from the factories would just about make you sick; all I could see out my windows were chimneys and the filth in the air." Mrs. Mary Owing was talking in the simple gray house an aunt and uncle of mine had owned, diagonally across the street from my old home. "Here I walk out on the porch and the air is so fresh, the birds are chirping and I feel like I'm in paradise. They tell me that tree on the front lawn will blossom so pretty in the spring. I can't wait for that. At the old place, all we had to look forward to was the next rotten building being torn down."

For eight years Mary lived with her husband, a mechanic and competition driver of dune buggies, and their four children in a $50-a-month apartment. Rats and roaches were unwelcome but regular visitors. A husky, good-looking woman with a smoky voice and a warm smile, even though two front teeth are missing, Mary went to school in the Kinsman area, dropped out in the 10th grade and was married at 16. She is a neat housekeeper, but on Kinsman there was a constant battle with the black soot that invaded her house daily. On Forest Avenue she enjoys cleaning the house because the environment doesn't despoil her work.

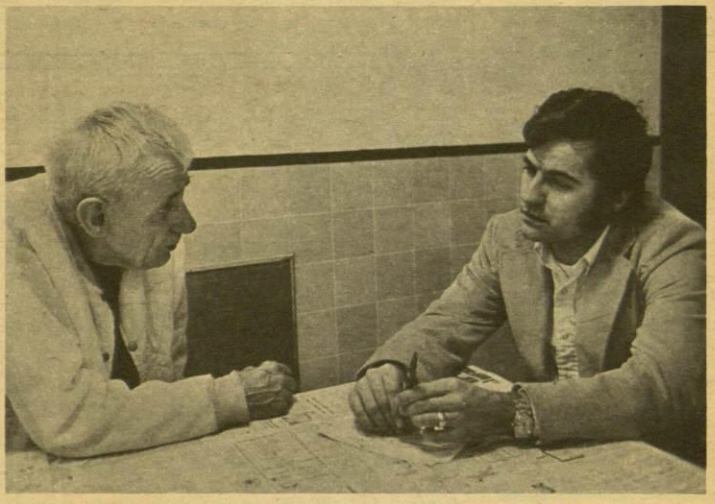
Her husband replanted some burned-out patches of grass late in the summer and nursed them along so carefully that they look better than the rest of the lawn. He wants to replant the entire lawn this spring. Contrary to what the whites on Forest say, Mary Owing doesn't want the black influx and white outflow to continue indefinitely; she wants a racially mixed neighborhood, and she plans to keep her house up. No neighbors have stopped by to welcome the Owings, but some have said hello as they passed. Still others have stared icily at Mary, who enjoys sitting on a kitchen chair on the front porch. A woman a few doors away found her sidewalk cracked—the work of children with hammers—immediately called the police and told them it was the work of the Owing children. As it turned out, it was not, but the woman sold her house and moved in a few weeks. "I don't want them to move out," Mary says, "because most whites do keep up their houses better than blacks, but what can I do? Tell me and I'll do it."

Across the street from Mary Owing, two doors away from Rose Hrutkai, lives Mrs. Lorainne Gibson. She and her husband, a telephone-panel repairman, and their small daughter were the first blacks to move onto this part of Forest Avenue. They lived before on East 90th Street, off Euclid, where the neighborhood scenery included a house of prostitution across the street and flashily dressed pushers selling to shaky young addicts.

Lorainne was folding her baby's diapers in the living room, absent-mindedly watching an afternoon soap opera when I called. She opened the door readily after I introduced myself and told her what I was doing. (In white homes I was viewed with suspicion and forced to ask the first few questions through the pane of a storm door. When I was a boy, even the magazine salesmen were invited in to give their pitch before being turned down.) Lorainne was wearing a bright orange pants suit that seemed strange during the day in a Forest Avenue house; cotton dresses and aprons were the usual attire.

"If it does anything, renting down there makes you appreciate having your own home," she said. "I will never have roaches, I will never have rats here. I saw some roaches down at Bill's Grocery the other day, and I don't go there any more. I go up to Stevie's, a black-owned place; it's cleaner."

Her husband was able to



The author and his father, a carpenter, at the family home in Cleveland. The younger Wilkes was embarrassed, after years of ignoring "the ethnic business," to start asking questions about the old neighborhood because he had an assignment.

secure a minimum-down-payment G.I. loan for their $18,000 two-family house, on which they pay $150 each month. The upstairs apartment brings $100 a month, and Lorainne supplements her husband's earnings by watching the two children of the woman upstairs, who works and receives child-care public assistance. "No two ways about it," Lorainne says, "we don't want this neighborhood all black; we have an investment to protect. But I'd like to see other young black couples, other white couples, move in because sometimes it gets a little boring around here for the housewife. The only thing wrong with the neighborhood is that there's a generation gap. Crime? The crime rate is going down. Mayor Stokes is doing a beautiful job."

Her attitude was typical. Most of the blacks in the neighborhood have come from high-crime areas, and they see their new homes as relatively safe. The older white residents, who remember when a mugging in the neighborhood was unheard of, feel that the area is crime-riddled and dangerous.

"Mostly," Mrs. Gibson said, "the white neighbors have been nice. One lady brought over a pitcher and glasses as a gift. Mrs. Martin showed me how to plant in the backyard. Then the lady next door buried a piece of rail—you know, like from the railroad—in her lawn, which is right by our driveway. Maybe somebody's car from our driveway ran over the grass a couple of times, but I never even saw a tire print. Now some of our friends have done hundreds of dollars of damage to their cars on the rail. That rail would have never happened if a white family had moved in. Listen, I'm more against all the lazy blacks on welfare than you are. I lived with all that down on East 90th."

I FOUND Mrs. Ollie Slay, my father's next-door neighbor, at home on a Saturday morning. She works as a maid in a hotel during the week, and her husband is a carpenter and general handyman. In the Slays' back yard was a large German shepherd on a length of heavy chain. I can't forget his deep and menacing bark and the grating sound of the chain as it was pulled taut by his lunges.

"I didn't know much about this neighborhood, about all the ethnic business," Ollie said after she turned down the Wes Montgomery record on the stereo. "All I wanted was a place I could live and let live. Down at East 100th, where we lived, we were robbed three times. We bought the dog and started looking for a house. Originally I came from a farm in Louisiana; no electricity, no indoor plumbing. So this house, this neighborhood.... well, I love it, I just love it.

"Everything we have, we worked for," she says. "Scraping together $1,500 for a down payment was the toughest thing we've ever done. So maybe blacks are the cause of crime in this area. But it isn't me out there bopping old ladies over the head. Talk about law and order—yes, sir, I'm for law and order. You can put me down as in love with the police."

IN the City Council elections last year, the people in my old neighborhood did a strange thing. They elected a Republican—a Republican of Scottish ancestry, at that. Jayne Muir ordinarily could never have been elected, regardless of her intent and qualifications. But, by marrying a Ukranian named Zborowsky, she gained a name as politically potent as Kennedy, Roosevelt or Taft. She is a former social worker whose constituency is distrustful of change and reform. Father Michael, for instance, says: "She's pushing the black movement too hard. She should listen more to the people."

In her storefront office on Buckeye Road, the usual complaints are handled by a group of New Frontier-like college students. The water inspector will be sent out on Friday to see why Mrs. Kovach's bill was so high. Mrs. Sterpka's petition for a new streetlight where an elderly woman fell and broke her hip will be forwarded with a properly irate letter to the illuminating company. But Councilwoman Zborowsky wants to do more than party pols and hacks have done in the past. One morning while puffing her way through a half pack of Benson and Hedges and self-consciously trying to rearrange an uncooperative head of hair, she talked about her area.

"The 29th Ward is a ward in transition. That means whites move out, blacks move in, businesses close and everybody forgets about it until it's a slum, then Model Cities is supposed to rejuvenate it. We have 40 per cent black, a lot of ethnics and a few WASP types on the upper edges, where we touch on Shaker Heights. We have people who are used to taking

SHOPPING MART

care of things by themselves and of living within their own world. My job is to bring them together for cooperation and to let them know at the same time they don't have to go inviting each other over for supper. They can still be private people with their own traditions, but divided like this, they'll be eaten alive. Crime is up 25 or 30 per cent, and there's no reason why it won't go higher. Blacks are suffering, too, but they are used to it. The press on the ethnics is so strong, they want to kid themselves it's going to be O.K. tomorrow. So they wait and hope. Useless!"

Realizing that one of the irreparable casualties of "transitional neighborhoods" is often the shopping area, Mrs. Zborowsky—in an effort to head off the problem in her district—has organized the Buckeye Area (Cleveland) Development Corporation. "Through it we hope to get foundation money, local, state, Federal money for development of the area that is beyond any businessman. There is no developer — as there would be for a suburban shopping center — ready to fly in here and be our angel." She found that of the 186 business locations in the Buckeye-E. 116th Street area, there were only 11 vacancies, and she wants to be sure that the number won't grow quickly.

THE development corporation may or may not get off the ground, and Mrs. Zborowsky knows it, so she continues to work on smaller projects. She compiled a list of the more than 30 real-estate companies working in the area and hopes to coerce them into stopping their scare tactics. She has been instrumental in helping streets organize block organizations. Through her prodding, the abandoned house that was the scene of the gang rape has been torn down.

"I have to avoid the expedient, calling names, plac-

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PICTURE CREDITS

1—BLACK STAR/CHARLES MOORE
12-13—RUDOLPH BURCKHARDT; FERDINAND BOESCH; BLACK STAR/CHARLES MOORE
14-15—THE NEW YORK TIMES/GEORGE TAMES; JIGSAW PUZZLE BY PAR COMPANY, LTD.
32—COURTESY OF PACE GALLERY
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57—TOM BEISWENGER
59—THE NEW YORK TIMES/GENE MAGGIO

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ing blame, merely getting more police in. That's what I'm pressured to do. Education is an overused word, but that's my job. The old residents of this ward have always relied on private institutions — their families, churches, clubs, lodges. Now they must be taught to report things to the police and not worry that they will in turn be prosecuted. This neighborhood has fantastic shops for ethnic baked goods, meats, renowned restaurants like Settlers Tavern and the Gypsy Cellar; there is something to be preserved. Right now I'm working to have an Outreach Station funded. It would be manned by an off-duty policeman and be a clearing house for complaints, a place where people could have problems taken care of. The reaction? Mixed. I get complaints like 'You mean I get mugged down on East Boulevard and I have to run up to the station on 116th Street to report it?' It's hard to get a new idea across."

FOR every optimist like Jayne Muir Zborowsky in the neighborhood, there are 10 nay-sayers. There were nay-sayers when I was a boy, but then the problems were cosmic and removed—like a pig-headed haberdasher named Truman or a war in a strange nation called Korea—or local but containable—like an increase in tax assessments or the placement of a stop sign. Then "bitching and moaning" was a part of ethnic life, our variation on "Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen."

On my visit I found people in the neighborhood, knowing that they are the forgotten Americans and no longer relishing the fact, doing two things. First, they leave. This is difficult to watch, but who can blame young families who want both good schools and safe streets for their children? The other reaction is frightening. These second- and third-generation Slovaks and Hungarians are digging in, hardening their attitudes because they are tired of being oppressed.

Take, for instance, one of the young policemen in the old neighborhood. He would talk only after I assured him I would not use his name. He admitted he was a typical Cleveland cop, ethnic, bitter and not afraid to say he was afraid. He feels the old neighborhood is so unsafe that he has opted for the suburbs.

"I was off-duty the other day, and I walked into a bar on Buckeye and kiddingly—you know, like Dodge City or something—I said, 'O.K., you guys, all the hardware on the bar.' There were five guys in there. Four pulled out guns. I'm a bigot and I know it, but arming isn't the way. These people are going to get those guns rammed right up their own butts some day.

"Dope is the big problem beneath it all, and blacks who don't have or don't want work. In the old days, a black man couldn't even ride through the neighborhood without it being a big deal. Now they can move freely because blacks live here. The bad element has found a gold mine, and they're going to work it. The worst thing is that nobody's on the street any more. Those that have to go out are prey for the wolves. Half the crime would stop if more people would be out."

Joe Kolenic, the author's friend at school, and his wife, Shirley. They moved to suburbia after Joe served with the National Guard during the '67 Hough riots. "It was a horror show," he says. "I didn't want to face that possibility in the neighborhood, so I left."

The anxiety and fear in the neighborhood have forged one significant group, the Buckeye Neighborhood Nationalities Civic Association. I attended a B.N.N.C.A. meeting one evening at the First Hungarian Lutheran Church. There were 15 or 20 people there, but two of them dominated the proceeedings. Ann Ganda, a woman with sharp features and a high, shrill voice talked about the proposed Outreach Center. "Those two colored kids have Legal Aid after they attacked us [there had been a street assault on an unnamed person], and what do we have? I'm in city housing. They demand tile in the kitchens and they get it. Sliding doors and they get it. We have to demand. We don't want an Outreach Center; we're too kind already. We want more police."

John Palasics, a scholarly looking man with a graying tonsure, three-piece suit and a low, calm voice, took me to the back of the room to display a street map another member had drawn. "This is our battle plan," he began slowly. "We want to have each house with a code number so that our police can get to any house in minutes. The city police won't cover us, so we are willing to give of ourselves. Special Police, Inc., has many people who have taken courses at their own expense to learn crime prevention and first aid, and if we can get the support, we'll have them on the street next year.

"I know people are calling us vigilantes," he said, and it was as if a switch was thrown some place inside him. His eyes widened in their red rims, his voice became louder and his right index finger jabbed at the air. "Anything the blacks say against us is out of ignorance. This neighborhood should be preserved as a national historic monument to mark the contribution of the nationalities. Monuments are WASP or black, nothing for us. We don't want our neighborhood liberated as a slum. And we don't want blacks in our group; we are for the preservation of the nationality way of life."

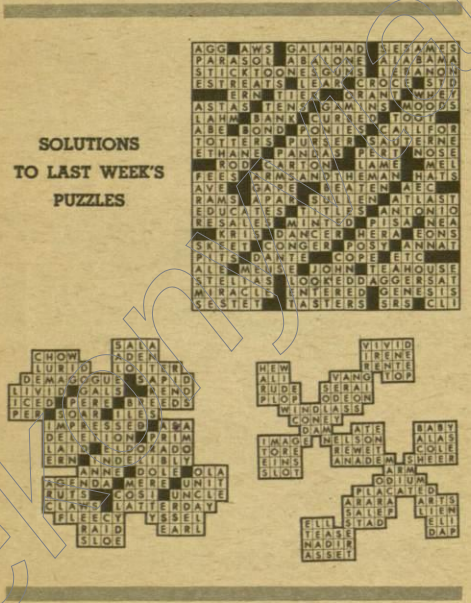
Words like "liberated" and "slum" came out of his mouth as if he had bitten down on some bitter fruit. "Listen, we know things the F.B.I. doesn't even know yet. When the blacks control this area," he said, sweeping his hand, now trembling, over the map, "they will put up roadblocks to keep the whites out of downtown. We know about all this. A black boy came up to me on the street the other day and said, 'We gonna keel you, whi' man, so get yo' —— out NOW.' Let the Anglo-Saxons turn their houses over to them. We demand a right of self-determination."

THEY are calling my neighborhood transitional, and it is not much fun to go home again. The old formula just doesn't seem to work any more, and there are few people left who want to move along positive lines. So the ethnics continue to abandon the neighborhood, each saying he hates to go and he'll hate to come back in five or ten years when, as many of them say, it will be another Hough. Most major cities must have neighborhoods like it, neighborhoods that are being left to new immigrants who want to believe they have moved to Nirvana.

On a Monday morning I prepared for the trip back to New York, feeling confused and depressed at what I had found. As I walked my dog along Forest Avenue, he did his duty on the lawn of the new black family next door. I moved on, deep in contemplation. A few minutes later, John Slay walked up and, after saying good morning, hesitated. I expected a final plea, a demonstration that the black man wanted to do right by the neighborhood.

All that John Slay asked was, please, and don't take offense, clean off the lawn. ■

SOLUTIONS TO LAST WEEK'S PUZZLES



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