

# MARCH ON CITY HALL FOR OPEN HOUSING

1 PM TODAY  
MEET AT UNION - 2<sup>ND</sup> FLOOR - NOON

## CIVIL RIGHTS REPORT

Michigan State University, EAST LANSING, Michigan

May 18, 1965

### 70 SIT IN, SIT OUT FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

Monday night's City Council meeting in East Lansing was not just another meeting. More than 70 persons, mostly MSU students, went into the meeting to persuade the council to adopt proposals for open occupancy in East Lansing. We did not expect a complete victory and did not get one. But we did want action.

We sat in because the council refused to do anything more than adopt a resolution against prejudice and agree to talk about the problem. After three and a half hours in the corridors outside the council room "the 70" were carried out one by one by police and dumped on the lawn behind City Hall.

Outside City Hall, up to 400 marchers carrying torches and singing freedom songs supported the sit-in for over five hours. They cheered each participant in the sit-in as he was carried outside and dumped.

This was not an isolated incident. Monday night's demonstration was just one battle in the continuing war against prejudice.

The long history of housing discrimination in this city must end, and now is the time to end it.

The city has the power to insure equal opportunity in housing for all its citizens. It must act now to eliminate discrimination or face continued pressure from all those interested in civil rights and human dignity.

That is why we demonstrated Monday night, and that is why we ask everyone concerned with equal rights to demonstrate with us at 1 p.m. today.

### NATIONAL ATTENTION FOCUSED ON EAST LANSING

The civil rights struggle in East Lansing is not being worked out in isolation from the rest of the world. This struggle is part of a national movement, and national interest has been attracted to it.

--over



cont. from page one--

JOHN LEWIS and JAMES FORMAN of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee WILL BE IN EAST LANSING TODAY to support the campaign for open occupancy. JAMES FARMER of the Congress of Racial Equality, the REV. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and author LOUIS LOMAX have pledged to repeat their visits to East Lansing if called upon to help in the fight.

EAST LANSING'S CIVIL RIGHTS WORKERS ARE NOT ALONE; EAST LANSING CAN NO LONGER PRETEND TO BE ALONE.

This afternoon's rally must be a massive show of student and faculty interest in the very vital problem of housing discrimination in this city.

#### LEGAL QUESTIONS NOT THE ONLY ISSUE

Two weeks ago, when nearly 100 students asked the City Council to begin developing a program "to eliminate discrimination in the area of sales and rentals with a legal statement embodying this program," the council merely referred the proposal to the Human Relations Commission. Monday night, we went back to the council to see what it had done about our proposals.

Early in Monday's meeting, a resolution was introduced and passed unanimously stating that the City Council disapproves of racial prejudice.

Byron Peterson, Campus NAACP president and civil rights spokesman, praised the statement, but told the council it was still only words. He then read a prepared statement calling for several specific legal measures in the area of human rights and an aggressive publicity program indicating that East Lansing welcomes persons of all races, religions and nationalities.

The council refused to consider any proposal for punitive measures against realtors and landlords who discriminate. It based its position on the decision of the state attorney general that municipal ordinances dealing with human rights are unconstitutional. Moreover, some councilmen seem to feel that even if an ordinance were legal, it might not be desirable.

We contend that not only is an open occupancy ordinance needed, but that its constitutionality is yet to be decided in court. East Lansing can lose nothing by proving now that it is truly an open city by passing such an ordinance, even if it might later be stricken down by the courts.

The council concentrates on its "achievements" in human relations, and brushes aside recurring cases of discrimination. It argues that the "atmosphere" of East Lansing has changed in the past few years. We say such a change is insufficient to help Negroes seek homes in East Lansing on an equal basis.

The council's position that change must be gradual and not antagonize certain white residents of the city may be fine for those white residents, but not for the minorities who suffer from discrimination.

East Lansing must act to protect the rights of the minorities as well as of the majority.

MSU Chapter, National Association for  
the Advancement of Colored People  
MSU Friends of the Student Non-Violent  
Coordinating Committee  
Committee for Student Rights  
Canterbury Club

\* \* \* \*

COME TO CITY HALL AT 1 P.M. TODAY--DEMONSTRATE FOR OPEN HOUSING