

Produced overnight by the Westside Action Ministry

March 22 -- Members of the Westside Action Ministry are trying

to serve as helpful go-betweens (mediators) in the West High School situation. Thursday we met with school board members and with the West High School administration. Friday we met with city administrators and with the Council of Churches.

We found the board and the high school administrators willing to listen to what we had to say on behalf of the students. We also are talking with students, parents, and other community people to see what their ideas are and to find out what might be done to solve the problems.

The Action Ministry will support community efforts in any way possible. If you would like to talk with a member of the ministry for help in solving the problems, please call one of the following:

Harlan Beach or Ramiro Cruz--Aedo  
Inner City Parish, 910 Galapago  
244-2636

Father Edmund Langton  
St. Joseph's Parish 534-4408

Kermit Derstine  
First Mennonite Church  
430 West Ninth Ave. 244-2093

Jim Hall  
Wesley United Methodist Church  
465 Galapago 222-3337

West High P.T.A. invites all parents and concerned citizens to a meeting Wednesday, March 26, at 10:30 a.m. in the Social Room of West High.

There will be open discussion. Loretta Rhym, 255-4910, is president of West P.T.A.

This is the most important meeting for parents of West students to attend this week. This is the best way for parents to have a say in what is done at the school. Every parent who possibly can go to this meeting should be there.

A meeting will be set up as soon as possible with the mayor and other city officials. Watch for the announcement.

March 30--Palm Sunday--the West Side Improvement Association will sponsor a public meeting at 2 p.m. at Auraria Community Center. All interested persons are invited. Someone will be present from the Police Department and the Westside Action Ministry to answer questions about the demonstrations Thursday and Friday at W.H.S.

The problems at West High School and in the community are so important and affect so many people that all residents should join together to make as strong efforts as possible to solve them.

Helen Lucero and Ralph Atencio, community developers at West Side and Platte Valley Action Centers, will be glad to give help to residents in their areas.

CHICANO STUDENTS' DEMANDS AT WEST HIGH

The following demands of Chicano students at West High School were presented to the Denver School Board at a meeting with city officials Friday afternoon in the Mayor's office. James D. Voorhees, president of the board, said the board would consider carefully all the points in these demands that are within the board's jurisdiction and would do all possible to improve the situation at West High.

1. That no West High student involved in the boycott be removed or dismissed. (Earl Paul, WHS principal, said Friday night this request will be met.
2. Dismissal of Harry B. Shafer, who has proved to be a racist teacher. We request that such an inadequate teacher be fired. (Mr. Shafer will be transferred to another school.)
3. That through the office of education West High enforce the inclusion of our people's history, our culture, language, etc., and our contributions to this country.
4. That bi-lingual education from elementary school through college become a reality; that our cultural rights as cited in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo of 1848 be recognized and abided by.
5. That the West High Neighborhood Complex (in the new school system) have its own school board with no at-large members.
6. That Chicano literature be provided in the West High School library.
7. That teachers become more aware of the social and economic problems of the community surrounding West High School.
8. That the teachers refrain from counseling West High Chicano students to join the armed forces.
9. That class size at West High be reduced so teachers can be more effective in the classroom. That team teaching approach be used.

## This Is How It Really Was

It was the first day of spring. It was warm with a slight breeze. As the students and other people marched from West High to Baker Junior High and back there was a certain lightness about the whole thing. They were for the most part high school students and other young adults, mostly Hispanics.

The students went back to Sunken Gardens and Archie, the student leader, talked to them for some time. He then sent some students in to see the administration. Following this he spoke with Helen Lucero who told him she had set up a special meeting of students, parents, and community leaders with Mr. Paul at 2 p.m.

Archie accepted this plan and went into the school to check on it. The other students started slowly, unorganized, to move back toward the school. At this point three cops took up positions on the main steps to the school. This drew the students to them at once. Yet the mood, though changing, was still somewhat light and testing.

Archie came out of the school and stood beside the cops and pretended to be one, which drew laughs from the crowd. Mr. Paul, Al Nieto of Police-Community Relations, and others then talked with some of the student leaders, standing between the police officers and the group of students.

During this time the students were singing songs, making statements about their demands, and calling back and forth to some of the many students hanging from the windows. Some remarks were in fun and some were in anger. The police must have called for reinforcements. About 12 more cops appeared on the scene and came to the front, near the steps and on each side.

At this point the lieutenant in the front of the group told the students to move back to Sunken Gardens. Up to now there had been no violence on the part of the students or the police. The students had razed some of the cops that they seemed to know by name.

Archie turned to the students and told them to move back to Sunken Gardens, and many of them turned to go. Some stood there trying to sort out what they had heard, for a couple of seconds, and waiting for those in front of them to move on.

As they paused, the cops quickly formed a line behind the kids and with their night sticks started pushing them roughly toward the park. About three other key things happened at the same time: Corky Gonzales tried to get through the crowd to the bull horn and was jumped on by two or three cops...The cops started spraying Mace on the kids from behind...One cop in plain clothes began beating a kid, then as many other students as possible, hitting them as often as possible. Everything broke loose--night sticks started swinging and cops were pulling girls' hair by the handful. Nearly every cop I saw had a mindless look and was beating kids savagely.

Not one student was armed with a weapon of any kind that I know of at this time or later except for old bottles, cans and rocks that they found in the park when they got there. They were just a bunch of kids. Many were arrested, many were beaten, and many of the girls were treated unduly roughly by the cops.

In every sense of the term it was a cop's riot against a group of unarmed, peaceful, fun-loving high school students who had the guts to stand up and say that many things were wrong with their school and that they wanted some changes.

--Jim Hall

### HOW MAKE YOURSELF HEARD ???

You can make a difference in police-community relations.

You can help improve the schools.

You can join with other West Side residents who want improvement. Your neighbors will welcome you to the community meetings at West Side and Platte Valley Action Centers and at Auraria Community Center. The time and place of meetings is published each month in the West Side Recorder. These meetings are your opportunities to make your voice heard.

The easiest way for most parents to join with other parents concerned about any school is through the PTA. If the unit at your school is weak, it needs you to become stronger. You can make yourself heard through the PTA.

Headquarters of the Denver School District is at 414 14th St. Phone 266-2255.

The Police-Community Relations office is at 13th and Champa Sts. 297-2378.

Some people are asking for a small police office on the West Side in order to reach better understanding between West Siders and the police. Are you in favor of this?