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The Peoria Transcript  
Established 1856

The Peoria Journal  
Established 1877

The Peoria Star  
Established 1897

## 'Together In Peoria'

The Association of Commerce's decision to go out after \$85,000 to support the "Together In Peoria" project of the police department is an illustration of the growing concern business and industry has taken toward human relations.

Not only in Peoria but all across the country, we see businessmen applying the "know-how" they have in getting things started and carrying them out to the whole range of problems which our society faces because of the black-white schism.

**"TOGETHER IN PEORIA** (TIP for short) is a project primarily directed at overcoming the conflicts and misunderstandings between some policemen and some Negro citizens by bringing them together with other citizens to talk about the problem in depth.

Experience has clearly shown us that people — whether they be black, white, or police, — do not always think straight or talk sense during physical confrontations of the type which the Negro advancement movement has brought about. Over and over, we read analyses which tell us that the issues which give rise to everything from rock-throwing to downright riot end up lost in the scuffle and consequently unresolved when people lose their heads.

So after the shooting, looting, and burning is done, community after community has found itself still plagued with problems which will erupt in more shooting, burning, and looting. As a result there is a lot of hand-wringing and, sadly, more hatred and confusion.

The TIP project is an outgrowth of a pilot effort two months ago by the Illinois Commission on Human Relations to put people who are on the firing line of this community problem into communication with one another. The light from this flame appears to have been so uniquely hopeful that the participants themselves, the police department and now the A of C, have moved with great speed to turn the whole burner on.

What has struck those who have talked to the participants in the December confrontation at the King's House of Retreats at Henry was not only their enthusiasm to see the project extended to others but, most important, the obvious change of attitudes which came over some of them.

RICHARD PENELTON, director of police community relations, has been enthused by the results. He has been struggling for almost two years to find ways to change some of the belligerent attitudes which threaten the peace of the community and make the resolution of racial problems difficult, and he sees in the aftermath of the Henry confrontation a promising answer.

The A of C, which announced it would solicit private funds and boost public support, and the six churches who had already pledged contributions through Projects for Progress, have moved rapidly, indeed. They hope to raise money for 15 conferences, in all, and begin them within about a month.

DR. RALPH I. CLAASSEN, A of C president, admitted the \$85,000 being sought is a lot of money, but he said that it is "very little when we consider the hours that are spent by police patrolling potentially explosive situations, and the cost of community damage that can result from interracial misunderstandings, particularly those that involve the police."

It has been said that nothing of this scope has been tried in any other community in the country, and while this may be true, it is also a fact that intensive confrontations of this kind have been employed by industries, governmental groups, religious groups, schools, and voluntary associations.

According to an article in the Feb. 15 Saturday Review of Literature, "Airing the Hang-ups", a day-long racial confrontation was even broadcast by a Boston radio station. This must have had impact on listeners as well as the participants. Yet, the significant observation in that article was of the participants:

**"They ended with astonishing rapprochements between hitherto hostile individuals, and a willingness to try to persuade their official groups to meet and go through the same experience."**

That is the same good result Penelton saw come out of the Henry confrontation.

What we need in Peoria are more "astonishing rapprochements" and if they can be bought, we can understand why businessmen and other concerned Peorians would want to dig down in their pockets.