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Pg 1

Threatens co action to halt board action

Local leaders this week served notice on the political power structure and the so-called "establishment" that Indianapolis Negroes will no longer blindly accept "token appointments which cannot result in good representation."

Rev. Andrew J. Brown, pastor of the huge St. John Baptist Church and president of the Indianapolis Social Action Council, attacked Mayor John Barton and demanded that Negroes be appointed to policy making bodies on all levels of the local political social structure.

"And when appointments are made, the appointees should be persons representative of the community and qualified through training and service to the community for the positions for which they have been selected," Brown observed.

These demands became the focal point of a controversy which exploded with the announcement of Mayor Barton's selection of a seven-member executive committee for a much broader organization to be called Community Action Against Poverty of Greater Indianapolis, Inc. This group will coordinate the Federal anti-poverty program as it is employed in this city.

Rev. Miller Newton, president of the Inter City Association and pastor of Fletcher Place Methodist Church, joined with Rev. Brown in opposition to the appointments.

Pointing to the fact that Negroes would be primary targets for any program against poverty, leaders were incensed when the mayor's list did not include any "known" Negroes. Rev. Brown blasted the appointments saying, "people who need most have no representation."

Statistics show that 60 percent of Indianapolis' Negro families earn less than \$5,000 (total family income) per year, while 65 percent of the white families earn \$5,000 or more annually. The Negro unemployment rate is over eight percent, while the white unemployment rate is around three percent.

In addition to the executive committee, it was announced that a board of directors consisting of some 40 members would also be appointed.

"We want Negroes on these committees," Rev. Brown demanded. "And we want Negroes who know the people and who through living and working

Turn to Page 4

Threatens court

Continued from Page 1

with these people know the needs of these areas to be embraced by the anti-poverty program."

Moving swiftly to the defensive, the mayor's office announced that the executive committee already included a Negro. He was named as David Smith, 42, 1532 Greer Dell Lane (outside the city).

Mr. Smith, an employee of the Army Finance Center, came here in 1952 from St. Louis. He is president of the American Federation of Government Employees, Lodge 1411, AFL-CIO. However, until his appointment to this important post he was unknown to local leaders who point out that he has never been active in any civic or civil rights causes here in Indianapolis.

Earl M. Barnett, president of the Indianapolis Chapter of the NAACP, and Andrew W. Ramsey, state NAACP president, sided with Rev. Brown and ISAC.

The NAACP released a withering barrage at The Mayor after it was announced that Rev. James L. Cummings and Rev. C. T. H. Watkins, Democratic office-holders, might be named to the committee. Rev. Brown was also mentioned as a possibility this week.

Barnett and Ramsey said such appointments would only represent the city administration and the "power structure." They said the NAACP will protest to the office of Economic Opportunity in Washington, D.C. They also indicated a court injunction may be sought to prevent any action by the local anti-poverty group "until Negroes who are supposed to be aided by this program, are represented on the board."

Observers see this new fight in another dimension. Leaders throughout the years have felt the political organizations have reserved key appointments and offices for a "few" Negroes. This "few," it is charged switch from one appointive office to another while the parties ignore a wealth of qualified Negroes who are serving this community. Both Rev. Brown and officials of the NAACP have indicated their organizations will attempt to bring pressure, "during elections, if necessary," to halt this practice and bring wide, balanced representation to Indianapolis Negroes.

An ordinance was introduced before the City Council Tuesday night asking for a shift of \$10,000 from the city general fund to the poverty organization. This money would be matched by \$90,000 in federal funds and would enable the local group to begin its work.

However, before the money can be shifted public hearings must be held and remonstrators must be heard. Rev. Brown has asserted he will mount an all-out offensive against the organization as it is presently constituted and will pack the hearings with articulate remonstrators.

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The home mission department of St. Mark AMEZ Church will have its guest speaker next Sunday at 4 p.m. Rev. Millard Newton of Fletcher Place Methodist Church will speak along with Rev. Brown.
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Pg 10.

Pg 4