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one he has associated with here.

War on Poverty Program Attacked; Social Equality Termed Impossible

A Los Angeles author, and Johnson administration critic, called the War on Poverty program a "new form of slavery" during a debate with an executive for the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) yesterday in the Campus Free Speech area.

Mrs. Patty Newman, author of the book "Pass the Poverty, Please," told a crowd of about 150 that the poverty program is giving the Negro, "the greatest inferiority complex the world has ever known."

The general trend of federal government aid in the poverty areas is destroying the dignity of the disadvantaged, she said. She called teachers' passing of Negro schoolchildren when they do not deserve to pass a "great insult" rather than a reward.

Defends Poverty War

Hal Brown, former San Diego County head of the Congress of Racial Equality and current director of leadership training for the OEO, defended the War on Poverty Program.

Mrs. Newman had called the program a "bureaucratic boondoggle and a waste".

Brown said while the program may have inevitable faults there is no other local drive to solve the conditions of poverty.

"You can criticize, ridicule, mock the program," Brown said, "but you can not offer a constructive alternative."

He indicated that critics such as Mrs. Newman would look for specific program sore points, such as communists and sex perverts, and use these isolated cases to destroy the entire program.

Cites Own Experience

Brown said that as a worker involved with the poverty program he saw evidence of the program helping individuals better their lives.

Mrs. Newman suggested that equality is impossible because of the family structure in the United States. Equality will never be achieved as long as family backgrounds differ, she said.

Brown retorted that he is not asking for equality, but for equal opportunity.

Brown said everyone is aware that racism exists but as soon as one brings the fact into the open, he is accused of "threatening society."

The "number one fear" of the "reactionary right" is that the poverty program and progressive trends will strengthen disadvantaged people who will question traditional agencies and promote new ideas, he said.

Program too Young to Criticize

In defending the War on Poverty, Brown said that a poverty problem exists is undeniable and "while the program has faults" it is at least a constructive attempt to solve the problem. He said it has not had a long enough testing period to be criticized on Mrs. Newman's level.

Mrs. Newman consistently emphasized that the "best thing the government can do (to solve the poverty problem) is nothing."

"You do not have to have the government do everything for you unless you have no guts and no courage," she said.

Brown claimed the country is where it is now because of "sugar plantation days of black slave labor." Now racism is promoting poverty and is the root of the poverty problem, he said.

POVERTY DEBATE – Patty Newman, co-author of "Pass the Poverty" and Hal Brown, director of leadership training for the Office of Economic Opportunity debate President Johnson's poverty program. **(Photo by Bill Brown)**