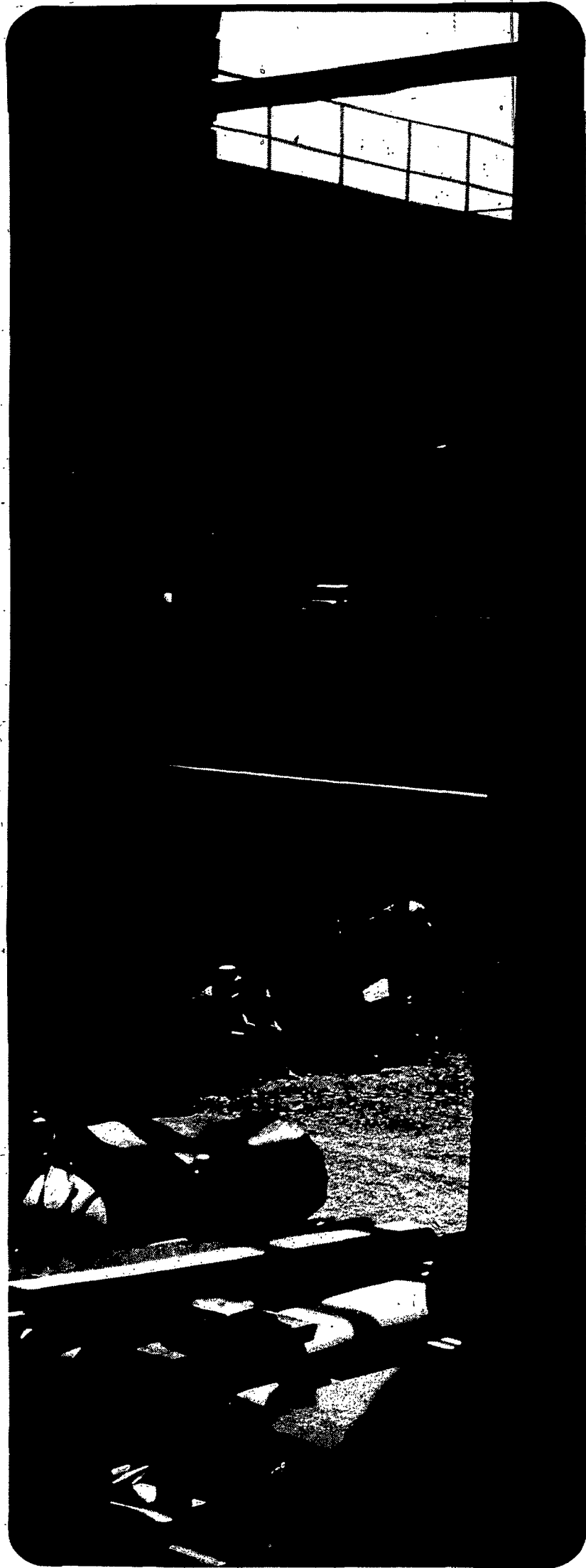


# 'An Un-hostile Place'

Since 1941, 480 South Ave. has been a source of "first aid to victims of society."

Thirty years ago St. Joseph's House of Hospitality became permanently stationed in this 100-year-old, three-story brick building. At that time it was incorporated as a non-profit, tax-free corporation. "A legal step we took so any donations would be tax exempt," explained Arthur Farren, one of the founding fathers of the center and president of its advisory board.

Dick Albrecht, one of the six live-in core workers, said, "We try not to serve only alcoholics. Their life style, though it is a sickness, comes closer to being chosen than the life of a psychotic. Alcoholics are just one sector of society's misfits, poor and hungry."



The hungry are always waiting. Inside the window can be seen materials for the workshop which will give sustenance for the heads and hands of the men.

"The house was founded on the ideas of the Catholic Workers Movement from back in the 1930s," commented Larry Scahill, who shares the job of overseeing with Albrecht. "We try to provide an un-hostile place for them, providing food and warmth for the old and lonely, victims of society."

Albrecht described their work as "crisis-oriented." We can't keep up with the number of victims long enough to get at their oppressors," he said. "We do innovative social work, totally spontaneous day-to-day service."

Scahill added, "We try to line guys up with benefits they have coming from welfare or social security, but don't receive because they don't understand the letters or they move to a new address and don't even receive their letters. We need more resources at the welfare building."

"We are also lining ourselves up with people at Strong Memorial Hospital and Monroe County Community Hospital. Many need medical attention," Scahill continued. "Sometimes we go to the emergency ward four times a day."

"Dr. Susan Hansen runs an excellent alcoholic treatment ward at Community Hospital. It is known as 2 West and part of the treatment is a five-day detoxification period."

"In the last three years," Albrecht explained, "young people have been steadily rejuvenating the house, by such improvements as installing toilets, showers and laundry machines for free use. And the quality and amount of food have improved."

"Little by little and with as much of our own energy as possible, we are restoring the building. Everything we do is done in the spirit of poverty. Things we purchase we buy with donations received over the years, and the food is donated by Strong Memorial Hospital, Mercy Motherhouse, Tobin Meat Packing Co. and the Cistercian Monastery of Our Lady of the Genesee."

"We serve about 60 guys lunch a day and a light dinner. In the winter we feel it is important to serve a really nutritious breakfast, hoping that some of the men will go to the day labor center and work for that day," he explained.

"The men find a vague community here. The thing we want to do is be a friend consistently over a period of time, something everyone needs. To be a person's friend can be truly meaningful for him. We bail a lot of people out of jail. They know we will respond to any need. This is not a service at all, it is a Christian life style."

They agreed that housing and jobs are critically needed. Albrecht explained, "We have been interested in establishing a farm commune to get the men out of their environment, to enable them to learn a new life style."

The other live-in workers at the house on South Ave. are Bonnie and Roy Portier, and Russ and Ruth Boisvert. "We don't get paid," Albrecht continued, "except for what we call toothpaste money."



Larry Scahill, top left, and Dick Albrecht, top right. Ruth Boisvert watches, at bottom, Jean Doser suits for blankets for the men. Many will suffer fr

