"THIS MIGHTY DREAM" is a multi-media history of popular movements for social change in the United States, sponsored by the Institute for Social Justice and the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN). The project was developed with a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities and is being brought to Boston with funding from the Massachusetts Foundation for Humanities and Public Policy.

Viewing social movements "from the ground up", the project takes an unconventional approach to its subject and aims to reach an unconventional audience: the low and moderate income membership of community, minority, women's, senior citizens', and labor organizations.

Rather than recounting the deeds of a few "great leaders", as most histories of social protest do, "This Mighty Dream" focuses on the experiences and aspirations of ordinary Americans who have organized for change. It traces popular traditions of egalitarianism and mass action over the years since the Civil War, treating the practical problems of organization and action as well as the complex and sometimes conflicting goals which have animated American movements for social and economic justice.

The project in Boston will run from October 25, 1984 to November 9th, 1984, and will consist of an exhibit, a series of four evening programs, and the airing of a radio series on public radio. In 1982 and 1983, "This Mighty Dream" travelled to 24 cities across the United States.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

The Exhibit

The centerpiece of the project is a travelling exhibit consisting of photographs, drawings, flyers, newspaper clippings, buttons, and other memorabilia interspersed with text drawn largely from the speeches and writings of participants. The exhibit will be housed on the first floor of 100 Arlington Street, College of Public and Community Service, U-Mass. Boston and will open to the public at 3:00 p.m. on October 25th.

The exhibit focuses on four broad subject areas:

Agrarian protest featuring the Farmer's Alliance and the People's Party, the Nonpartisan League, and the Southern Tenant Farmers Union.

Labor organizing beginning with the Knights of Labor, following the course of organizing in the steel industry from the I.W.W. to the C.I.O., and concluding with contemporary efforts to organize low-wage industries, such as the United Farm Workers of America.

Racial and national liberation movements from the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and the March on Washington movement of the 1940's, through the black freedom movement of the 1960's, as well as Chicano organizing in the Southwest and Native American tribal sovereignty struggles.

Urban protest and community organizing including the Unemployed Councils of the 1930's, Saul Alinsky's neighborhood organizing in the 1940's, the National Welfare Rights Organization, and contemporary organizations, such as ACORN.

Throughout the exhibit, the materials highlight the role that women have played in the four subject areas.

PROGRAMS

As a supplement to the exhibit, a series of four evening programs will be presented. These programs will focus on the role that Boston and Bostonians have played in various movements, and each will consist of a film, slideshow, or video viewing, which will be followed by a panel presentation and audience discussion. The panels will consist of local activists, scholars, and movement participants. Each program will run from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Bostonians in Opposition to War: Tuesday, October 30th, 100 Arlington St., Rm. 222. A viewing of the film, "The Boston Draft Resistance Group" will be followed by a panel presentation. Panelists will trace anti-war protest in the Boston area, beginning with the Spanish-American War and up through the Viet Nam War; examine social circumstances which contributed to the relative success or failure of anti-war movements in Boston and nationally; and discuss ways in which people examine the morality of war.

Boston Women in Protest: Thursday, November 1st, Rm. 222, 100 Arlington St. The film, "Genesis 3:16" will be followed by a panel presentation. The film is a documentary which depicts the development of the "new feminism" in Cambridge in 1971, and contrasts public protest with small group consciousness-raising discussions. Panelists will review the role of women in early labor struggles in the Merrimac Valley, and trace the organizing efforts of women through more modern efforts in the healthcare industry, as well as the growth of current day feminist organizations.

Unity and Conflict: Wednesday, November 7th, HRE Local 26, 58 Berkeley St., Boston. Labor historian James Green will present a slide-show which will depict past and present social movements in the Boston area, focusing primarily on instances when Bostonians crossed significant social barriers (of race, sex, and religion) to act collectively with people of different race, gender, and faith. Participants of past and present movements will discuss their own experiences with these barriers.

The Tactics of Protest: Friday, November 9th, 169 Mass. Ave., Boston, 2nd Floor. A presentation of the film, "Squatters: The Other Philadelphia Story", will be followed by a panel presentation on the tactics of social movements. The film—which won the Silver Award at the 1984 San Francisco Film Festival for the best political and historical film and will be shown in Boston for the first time—depicts the civil disobedience conducted by poor Philadelphians in an effort to reclaim abandoned houses in their neighborhoods for homeless families.

Radio Series. As a part of "This Mighty Dream" in Boston, a four-part radio series will be aired. The series focuses on seminal movements or events in the history of particular movements, and each program weaves together narration, music, and interviews with participants from the various movements featured. The featured movements and events include the Nonpartisan League in North Dakota; the Akron rubber workers' strikes in the early 1930's; the Nashville civil rights lunch counter sit-ins of 1960; and the Chicano rebellion in Crystal City, Texas, in 1969.

THEMES

In all its activities, "This Mighty Dream" addresses a number of recurring themes in the study of social movements, such as:

—The tension between winning immediate benefits for the membership and broader social goals.

—Divergent conceptions of social and economic justice.

—The ethics of civil disobedience.

—Racial and sexual divisions within social movements.

—The tension between "organization" and "movement".

—The personal development of movement participants.

—Leadership accountability and organizational democracy.

For more information about **"This Mighty Dream"** *in Boston, call (617) 266-7100.*

The Institute for Social Justice is a national training and research center which provides training in the principles and practice of community organizing. It provides training and technical assistance to community activists and organizations, attorneys and legal organizations, and church social justice groups. The Institute also publishes a quarterly journal and training handbooks, and conducts special educational projects.

The Massachusetts Foundation for Humanities and Public Policy makes grants to support public education projects which bring the learning of the humanities to bear on current controversial issues for the benefit of the citizens of Massachusetts. Individuals or groups interested in obtaining a grant may contact the Foundation's office at 144 Woodside Avenue at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, (413) 545-1936.