

# Ask Civilian To Inquire Into Police Abuse Cases

Directors of the Welfare Council of Metropolitan Chicago are calling for an ombudsman, a civilian authority, to which all law enforcement agencies will be accountable.

In a resolution adopted at its December meeting the Council also urged creation of an official body which would have ongoing power to investigate and bring charges whenever there is alleged unlawful activity by law enforcement agencies.

The Council also threw its collective weight behind Chicago Bar Assn. proposals for a full and impartial investigation of the deaths of Illinois Panthers Fred Hampton and Mark Clark. The Council's action, however, would extend these probes to include the circumstances in which other young men died this past year in encounters with police.

The resolution points out that the deaths of John and Michael Soto and Steven Dixon and the serious wounding of Pedro Medina and James Alexander have not been publicly investigated to the satisfaction of witnesses and community people. The Council has called for a special grand jury and a special prosecutor for the investigation of these incidents and other allegations of the use of excessive force.

The resolution is the outgrowth of a three-month study of police-youth-community relations. It warns that such practices by law enforcement agencies as "entry without search warrant into private property where young people convene, search without warrant of young people going to and from meetings, seizing of young persons of one group and then releasing them in the area of a hostile group, and the carrying of shotguns in everyday law enforcement, subvert citizen participation in law enforcement and put officers and private citizens alike in greater jeopardy."

"All of these events," the resolution states, "appear to be a pattern of unlawful activity in the name of the law, which constitutes a clear and present danger to all citizens in our society."

Said John H. Ballard, the Council's executive director:

"The conclusion is inescapable that accountability to civilian authority and impartial, public investigation of police action must be built into our law enforcement system, if trust and cooperation between the police and the community is to be restored."

The Council's study was made by special committee on police-youth-community relations chaired by Lester Mouscher. The group is continuing its work under the Tension Areas Committee which assists the Council's member agencies in developing greater responsiveness to the needs of blacks and other minority groups. Mrs. Charles J. Runner chairs the Tension Areas Committee.