

that they create barriers for people on the path toward self-sufficiency."

Want to find out where you can't sit down, can't sleep, can't ask for spare change? *Mean Sweeps* sums it all up in a helpful two-page table. Attached tables provide comparisons of emergency shelter space, transitional housing capacity, and the size of the homeless population in 50 American cities. Fair market rents, percentages of poor people able to afford them, unemployment rates, monthly earnings, and General Assistance and Food Stamp levels are also tabulated.

Mean Sweeps compares the overnight cost of incarcerating someone in jail, on the one hand, with providing food, shelter, transportation, and counseling on the other.

On average, jail costs over \$40 a day; shelter and other services combined cost only \$30 or less. *Mean Sweeps* reports on anti-homeless laws in 50 major US cities. Some cities, such as San Jose, received a favorable report in December, but have since enacted repressive anti-poor laws.

The final section of the report summarizes court cases nationwide which affect the homeless. It includes 18 cases involving camping, sleeping, sitting, or storing property in public places, along with updates. Anti-begging laws and anti-vagrancy laws receive a detailed treatment. Those working for social justice on the judicial level will find this section most valuable in finding ways to combat anti-homeless laws.

The NLCHP writers have also been active out in the field. At this January's *Building Unity: Defending the Civil Rights of Homeless People* conference in Los Angeles, Foscarinis and Bendor spoke out publicly in support of activists in the trenches fighting for homeless rights. In March, Bendor appeared in Santa Cruz at the invitation of local activists and councilmembers to provide a legal perspective in a special council meeting following a brief fiery public debate on changing Santa Cruz's Sleeping Ban for winter shelter emergencies.

It would be helpful for NLCHP to extend and regularize this support by issuing timely press releases opposing restrictive laws as they appear before city councils. The California Homeless Civil Rights Action Network (CHCRAN), formed at the *Building Unity* conference, successfully delayed implementation of Glendale's Sleeping Ban. CHCRAN has challenged laws at the formative stage in Palo Alto, Santa Barbara, Mountain View, and San Jose. CHCRAN mobilized opponents in distant cities to fax, phone, and write the city councils and chambers of commerce in locales considering new restrictions on the homeless, and to support protesters physically on the scene.

By working with CHCRAN and other activists, the NLCHP can provide the intellectual muscle to turn back these new anti-homeless "laws," which might better be described as "crimes against humanity," to use the Nuremberg phraseology. NLCHP's broad national perspective allows it to propose persuasive positive alternatives that could preserve basic human rights and meet the real concerns of diverse urban communities which are battlegrounds of the class war in the '90s.

