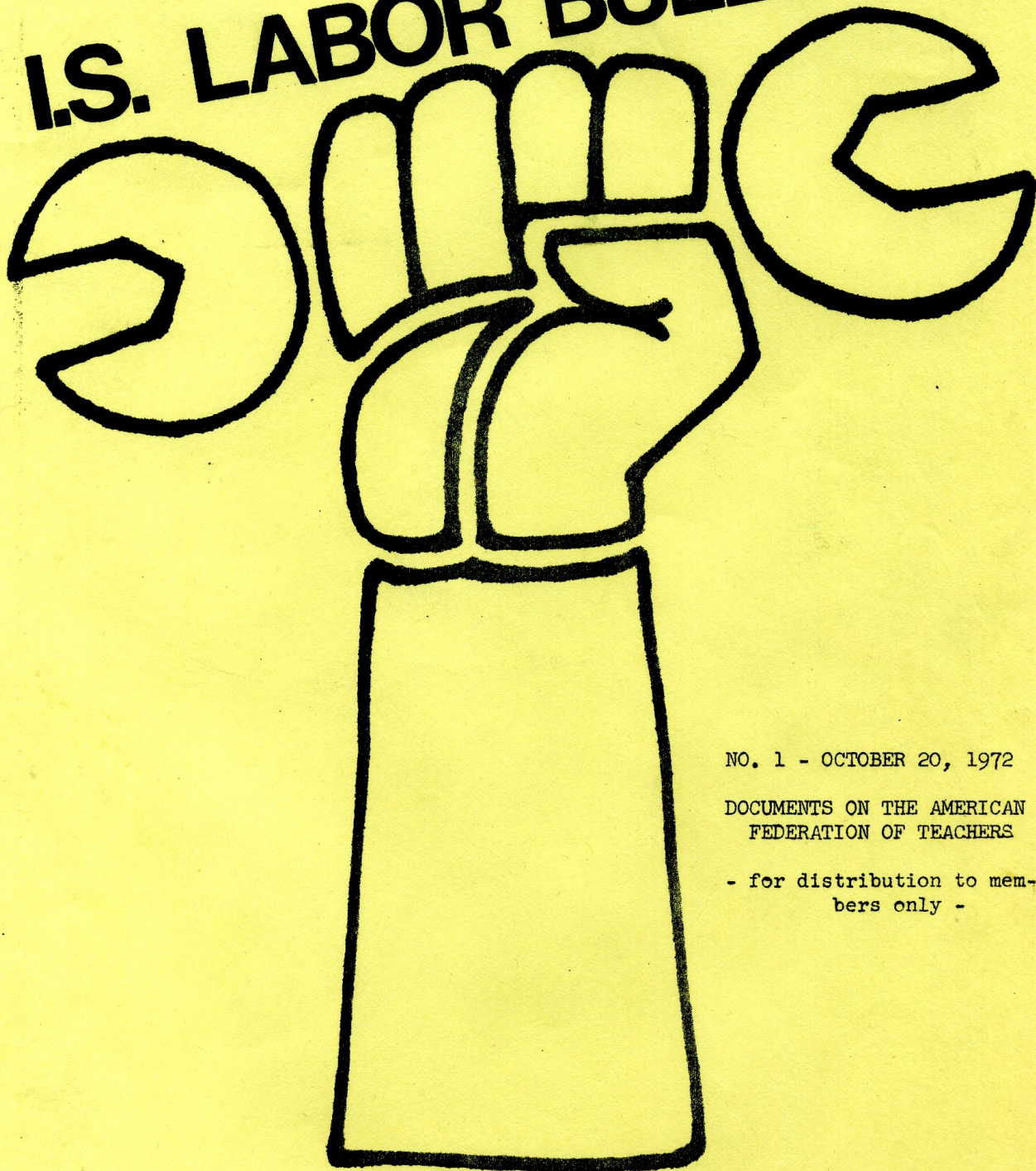


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DOCUMENTS ON THE AMERICAN
FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

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DRAFT (FIRST) OF IS -- AFT RESOLUTION -- OCT., 1971 -- David Miller

That the AFT is in crisis which transcends even that of the labor movement as a whole at this time is too well-known to require extended comment. The growing teacher "surplus," the decline in funds available to the schools; the urban crisis; the loss of confidence among teachers in the efficacy of our schools today, all point to the AFT as a union in deep crisis. Our response to this situation cannot be concrete without however a full statement of the unique features of the teaching industry and of the union.

The Schools As Agents of Oppression

Teachers work in schools whose function, like that of all education, is to preserve the status quo. And since our society is essentially bureaucratic, authoritarian, with only a veneer of democracy, it comes as no surprise that our schools have a similar structure. The dehumanization of the schools, of teachers and students, flows organically from this fact.

Our society is divided along class, race, and sex lines, and the schools serve to replicate these divisions. They are designed to produce the labor power and mental framework needed by this society's productive apparatus. Tracking is one instrument to attain this end. Where children of one class succeed in "escaping" despite the schools, it becomes the function of the university to housebreak them, intellectually and morally "adapt" them to the values of our society. This perverting function further guarantees the necessity of a bureaucratic structure for the schools.

But this apparatus serves to oppress the teachers as well as the students. As a result, the teacher becomes the classic man-in-the-middle. This is especially true when dealing with black and working class students. The teacher acts as the mediating instrument, the front for the bureaucracy and the status quo and thus often bears the brunt of the students' hostility to their systematic oppression. Similar pressures come from the community. Both, understandably, blame the visible instrument of oppression, itself oppressed, instead of the real oppressor.

The rise and "success" of teacher unions is a response to these degenerative conditions as well as to the rising expectations, militancy of teachers and other public employees in the past decade.

But the unquestionable gains made by the union till recently in the area of welfare are daily eroded by the union's total inability to even significantly meliorate the state of the schools. It is clear that token measures, the many government and union sponsored "innovations," offer no solution to the profound crisis of the schools.

Essentially, the reason for the union's failure lies in its lack of class consciousness as opposed to traditional union, craft consciousness. Consequently, the union in practice sees the teachers' welfare as basically in conflict with the students and the community. Instead of identifying the system as the enemy, the union, in effect, in deeds not words, identifies the

students, the black and brown communities, and the working class family as the enemy. Instead of identifying with, and collaborating with the students, black and white, for better schools, the union's provincial short-sightedness drives it, even against its will, toward seeking allies in the conservative educational establishment, the police, and the establishment politicians.

As a result, the union is unable to formulate genuine solutions for the crisis of the schools; it prevents the union from seeing the system as the enemy and, therefore, makes it impossible for the union to alert and rally the organized working class, whose children are the major losers in our schools, to fight against the ineffectiveness of our schools. Furthermore, the dependence upon the politicians for protection and aid makes it equally impossible to demonstrate the system's responsibility for the evil in the schools or justify a call for independent political action.

The fact that the source of the disease in the schools is the system dictates the major trust of action and warns us against the secondary diversions still so common to "new left" teachers.

Naturally, it is impossible within a very limited degree to be "radical" in the classroom by using innovative, organically democratic curricula, working in a style respectful of young people, etc. But in doing so, we reject the utopian illusion that we are actually performing a radical function -- we do not believe in socialism in one school.

We say to such radicals in the classroom that democratic education is inconsistent with the very deepest instincts and needs of our society, and therefore cannot be introduced on a significant scale (or even be genuinely effective or successful on a small scale) without a fundamental attack on the system. The defeat of the "progressive education" of Dewey in the US, despite the superficial adoption of many of its forms; the introduction, temporarily, of progressive education into the Soviet Union in its revolutionary democratic stage, and the complete reversion to bureaucratic norms of education after Russian society began to be bureaucratized -- these must be unforgettable lessons. New curricula and efforts have their major consequences in serving as models and norms around which teachers can be rallied, and through which the dehumanizing character of our society can be demonstrated.

A second common misunderstanding among many radicals, not ourselves, is that the hopes of education rest with the community. This one-sided view can lead to disaster. For without the cooperation, intimate and consistent, of the teachers and community, the schools cannot be seriously changed, and the teachers cannot attain their ends. Any strategy which counterposes, or fragments the necessary alliance, must fail, and can only worsen the present situation. (N.B. The generally pedagogically conservative views of most community people will only be overcome by teachers who are recognized as friends and effective friends -- that is, have mass support among the teaching staff.)

Our program is, in the last analysis, a class program for the schools. Most teachers today do not yet accept our class analysis of the schools. But there is increasingly receptivity to radical "solutions" as a result of the

intensity of the crisis in education, not least of which is the militancy and sophistication of the students. Therefore, we propose:

(1) Democratic schools -- supporting student demands for a voice in their education, we advocate control of the schools by committees of teachers, students and parents. (2) Funds for Education -- to come from the corporations and the war budget. Our rationale? The schools provide the technical training of the work force -- a vast subsidy to the corporations. (3) That teachers and the union affirm our rights to take any measures needed at any time to assure funds -- action to include job actions and strikes on every level. (4) The teacher movement must recognize that in adopting a class policy it is committing itself to active, not just verbal, support for the rights and needs of all workers.

The problem then is how to win teachers to such a class strategy.

The AFT -- Some Special Features

The AFT, while not an "industrial" union, has several special features which dictate that it should be a major point of concentration for IS, immediately after the central industrial unions.

1. The union is still in the stage of growth (especially in California) and it is consequently relatively easy to get in on the ground floor.
2. The absence, to date, of a single, industry-wide employer, or even statewide employer, etc. renders the local organization relatively independent of the national and state organizations, hence relatively free of bureaucratic restraints. Power resides mainly in the locals by virtue of the isolated bargaining patterns and a long tradition of democracy and local autonomy -- a tradition the national leadership is constantly trying to erode, thus far unsuccessfully.
3. The part of the industry organized by AFT, the big urban areas, places the union in the vortex of the crisis of the cities with all the contradictions and consequences.
4. The concentration of membership in the cities means that the role played by Blacks in the union can be immense, since with the exception of New York City, most major cities have a large and rapidly growing black staff. Black local presidents exist in Newark, Washington, Baltimore, Kansas City, St. Louis, and many others.
5. Teaching creates the possibility of contact and organization of radicalizing high school students.
6. The public employee unions are, today, in the front line of capital's assault on labor.
7. Many of the most idealistic new-left activists have and will go into teaching.
8. Many non-bargaining locals (a majority of the locals, though not of the total members), have local leadership, as in Calif., which tend to be more political and "left".

9. The AFT, like all teacher organizations today has little conventional muscle relative to the employer. We are faced by vicious anti-strike laws; by our inability to close down a basic, profit producing industry; by a low level of organization of teachers even when a contract exists; and by a split Black movement which has, in recent years, partly as a result of the 1968 UFT strike, been split in its support of teachers strikes. Newark is only the most dramatic example.

Problems of AFT

1. Source of Money -- the sources of money for education is in the process of great transition. Localities are no longer able to support public education. This is especially true of big cities. Clearly there are powerful pressures for transferring the financing of schools to the states and/or federal government. Until that question is resolved, the lack of funds only accentuates the union's weakness, forcing it to seek new instruments of power.

These center about: (a) coalition with all public employee unions; (b) statewide strikes or other actions; (c) political action.

Of these three thrusts, the highest priority, our agitational efforts, must, at this time be placed on the first two. First, because we do not envisage political action as a substitute for mass action (even with a "labor party"). Indeed we see political action as an adjunct to mass action, not visa versa. Secondly, because the likelihood of IPA is small today, the only real political action on the agenda is that of the social democracy, for whom such action is a substitute for mass action, and an excuse for avoiding it, i.e., an excuse for moving the union to the right. IPA is then for us, today, a propaganda slogan, not an agitational one.

2. The Right to Strike -- the emphasis on political action and pressures act as a self-release upon the AFT leadership permitting them to de-emphasize the fight against anti-strike laws. From our viewpoint then, this is key to progress. Our policy of advocating joint councils of all public employee groups to plan strikes, and action for the right to strike is still key, for which it is necessary to win the ranks of the teachers.

3. The Freeze -- For an indeterminate period, the incomes policy is with us. The crisis of American capitalism clearly indicates that any retreat from such a policy can only be temporary, and that the freeze will be THE issue in the labor movement in the period ahead. Just as during WWII, the no-strike pledge became the key to militant organization of the labor movement, so the freeze (and all that follows as the bureaucrats attempt to sell it) is likely to be the rallying point of the left in the labor movement in the period ahead. Our task will be to accomplish what we failed to accomplish in the early "40's," -- to link the freeze to heightened awareness of the role of the state and its front groups, the parties and bureaucracies, and, the need for IPA.

But it should be easier this time, because the freeze occurs in the midst of a profound social as well as economic crisis, unlike WWII, in which there was general support for the war and the system. There are already signs that the initial favorable response to the freeze ("You gotta do somethin") is falling off.

Clearly, the demands of the period ahead will revolve around such issues as: No Labor Participation on the Boards; Support of Strikes in Defiance of the Boards (there will be plenty of them). This will provide increased opportunity for the development of classwide, cross-union actions and organizations (and for real and needed "strike support committees" by IS). To the extent that we are leaders in our own unions we can expect to play a significant role in such developments.

4. Organizing the Unorganized -- The US has the highest percentage of UN-organized work force of any industrial country. In the case of teaching, however, the problem is complicated by the fact that while the union clearly dominates the socially decisive urban centers, the larger and more conservative NEA dominates the suburbs and smaller towns.

It would be inaccurate to speak of the NEA, as one once could, as a company union. The considerable changes in the NEA are not just an opportunistic response to the rise of the AFT, but are also a result of the same events which gave rise to the AFT (sputnik, civil rights movement, the "radicalization" taking place in the country, etc.). The changes in NEA are such that in many places it is not qualitatively different from the union. The predominance of administrators in the NEA is being qualitatively reduced; local NEA strike as often as AFT; the dominant conservative force preventing closer collaboration with AFT is no longer, or at least much less, the administrative members of NEA, as it is the bureaucracy which runs the NEA and fears for its rights and emoluments. And secondly, the continuing resistance to affiliation with AFL-CIO -- which conceals residual identification with "AMA-type professionalism." Even here there has been considerable movement (if only in that the ties to reactionary groups such as the Legion, etc. have to a great extent been broken).

Further obstacles which are in the process of change. In the past the center of opposition to merger with NEA rested on three layers. First, the Black movement, which, in the AFT, had a palpable weight -- note its many local presidents and five members on the AFT executive council of 20. This, combined with an NEA whose history has been until recent years one of adaptation to the racist system in the South, was a powerful deterrent. But this opposition has considerably weakened and will weaken still more due to: (a) the changes within the national NEA which has fought to protect black teachers' jobs in the South; (b) the dominance of Shakerism in the AFT with its racist connotations; (c) the growing movement of blacks toward recognizing the overriding need for a powerful teacher movement in their interest, and that, in a Shanker-dominated union, the differences with NEA begin to become less distinct, and less formidable.

Second, a sizeable, in fact dominant, bloc of locals in the midwest. This area, generally tending, in the past, to be more politically conservative wing of the union, is the oldest part of the union. It has also been the most broadly successful part. Despite its conservatism, it was raised on anti-company unionism and the need for class unity inside the AFL-CIO. Its opposition has been healthy, but at the same time a bit sectarian. It was this wing which was responsible for the near defeat of Selden for President last year, and for the passage of a resolution banning merger talks and setting membership with AFL-CIO as an absolute condition. (Shanker voted against this resolution.)

Third, objections from the left (see my 1968 enclosure) -- that merger could only produce, at this time, a new AMA, anti-social as well as racist organization.

However, we must recognize (a) the changes in NEA, (b) the increased conservatism of AFT, (c) the changing objective situation in the country which creates the real possibility of a genuine class-based left within the merged organization, and (d) changes in Black assessment of the AFT and NEA.

For these reasons we must reconsider our previous policy on merger, demanding as conditions of merger: (1) remaining inside the labor movement, (2) a democratic organization which allows for parties and proportional representation of all caucuses, (3) a commitment to fight for the right to strike, (4) opposition to the freeze; thus distinguishing our support for merger from Shanker's.

As a step in this direction, we ought always to seek united fronts with NEA on all levels on actions proposed by us.

5. Political Action -- The especially great impact of the social crisis upon teachers and their status as government employees makes the issue of political action a central issue in the union. But this circumstance has both a right as well as a left potential. Indeed in the immediate future, the conservative consequences of this situation are likely to predominate. The immediate response to the crisis has generated in the first instance a climate of retreat and fear. The qualitative reduction in the number of September strikes by teachers would have materialized even if there had been no freeze to complicate and rationalize the retreat. This will play into the hands of the "politicizers" in the union who turn to pressure on the state and political action not as an aid to teacher pressure, but as a substitute for militant action and strikes. That is, in our special situation, the politicization is profoundly conservative in character (even leaving aside the fact that the proposed politics are bourgeois). This development is in fact endemic, though not absolute or irrevocable in all public employee unions.

We for our part of course have not resisted the politicization of the union. We quarrel with its class character, counterposing (1) IPA and the Labor Party to the support of the Democrats, and (2) political action as an aid to class struggle policies, not as a substitute.

(This being well understood among us, perhaps it would be useful to consider a tactically secondary, but hardly unimportant question. When and under what circumstances do we raise the demand for the labor party, or IPA? While we cannot officially budge from our demand, it does not follow that we, as militants, must at all times call directly for the labor party. WE should consider the advisability of saying to teachers: "We are for a labor party, but you do not agree. Very well, then; at the very least you should put your politicians to the test. Can you support your democrats if they are against our right to strike, and if they are for the freeze? Why don't you make this a condition of support?" This, today, in 1971, when, barring unanticipatable developments, the vast majority of conscious workers will, however reluctantly, vote Democratic. As the crisis intensifies, naturally, we have every reason to be confident that our propaganda for the labor party will meet with an increasing response.)

6. Joint Mass Action -- Revolutionists reject conventional political action as the road to power -- that is the parliamentary road. Our conception of a party is one which leads masses in the streets, using Congress, and the process of getting there, as a forum. For this reason we constantly refuse to foster any illusions about any party activity in Congress as key to our problems, even a labor party. To us the key is always mass action.

Consequently, our task is to formulate in a variety of ways adjusting to each situation, the methods of mass action, and, the class concept, cross-union actions. The fact that public employee unions have a common employer, or near-so, makes this cross-union approach easier of realization for us.

Hence our demand, on federal aid, for forging a coalition of organizations, not for lobbying, but for a national or statewide strikes, even if at first they are token actions, an hour, etc. Or, the creation of large strike funds to encourage strikes in situations such as that in New York, where teachers are fined two days pay for each day out.

(Problem -- the Winton Act in California -- does it actually illegalize strikes, or is that done via some other law? If strikes are not illegal, the problem is to get the board to bargain. We are not fetishists about contracts, understanding full well that a contract is just a formalized truce in the class struggle, and is also, in a sense, a sign of weakness on the union's part. If so, is the Board's refusal to sign a contract a real obstacle? It can even be converted into an advantage by permitting more frequent mass actions. The success of the Los Angeles strike (to the extent that the Board is in practice living up to the contract despite the court ruling against it); the success of the San Francisco strike, even without any contract, suggest the real weakness is, today, not the law, but objective circumstances which make strikes more difficult -- no money, teacher "surplus," dual organization, etc. I regret our failure to discuss this item in August. No doubt you will want to us the red pencil here especially.)

7. The United Action Caucus -- This coalition of left liberals, new lefts, blacks of varying degree of radical consciousness, and a layer of conscious revolutionists, is bound together by common opposition to the conservative general outlook, the authoritarian practice, and the Meany-apologetics of the Shanker leadership. Within the caucus, the differences are great. On the question of mass actions, the UAC gives lip-service, lacking any confidence in the realizability of such actions. As a whole, the caucus has not broken with the Democratic Party, and does not understand the source of the degeneration of the union bureaucracy. At the same time, there are many in the caucus who genuinely recognize the need for IPA and mass action.

Our tasks at present are to function within the UAC, organize a left opposition within it around IPA and a policy of class action, and, today, absolute hostility to any participation by labor on the freeze machinery.

At this time it would be premature to create an open structure for ourselves. It would appear, and in fact would be, sectarian in that it would unnecessarily create a barrier between ourselves and others in the caucus who see no need for such a sub-caucus, and who, in fact, accept us as a legitimate part of the caucus, even a necessary part of it, which is not being discriminated against (yet). The situation may well change after the next convention, and indeed, even during the convention, if it appears that the UAC has a real chance of winning anything in the elections.

For the next convention we must keep in mind the need for local sponsorship of resolutions on IPA, labor party, total rejection of the freeze, re-introduce our mass actions resolutions, and, at least one car-load of delegates. Any resolutions to be submitted should first be circulated within the fraction.

8. College Work -- Given the priority IS places today on industrialization, there should also be no doubt that our second most crucial group of cadre is that in higher education (Comrade Jacobi's efforts to begin to organize this arena must be given every support.)

Our comrades in higher education have three special functions and responsibilities to the movement. In order of priority they are: First, to participate vigorously in providing the IS with a journal and other intellectual work which is so badly needed. Secondly, bringing Marxism to the university students, and the students to IS. Thirdly, build AFT in those situations where the effort appears promising, mainly in the state and city college systems.

The current economic situation may well accelerate the growth of college unions. But in our view, the order of priorities, barring exceptional situations, should remain as above.

9. The Black Movement -- The entry of the Black Caucus of AFT into the UAC is not an isolated phenomenon. To appreciate and understand it one must see it as part of the entire developing thrust of the black movement in the country. The decline over the past year of separatist-nationalist, and cultural-nationalist aspects of the black movement is very marked. Even when the FORM of nationalism is maintained, as in the case of Leroi Jones, the substance is being displaced by a direct and heavy return to the mainstream of American reformist politics, the Democratic Party.

The degeneration of the Black Panther Party is clearly part of this same process. Unable to move consistently toward the working class, the movement split, one wing to adventurism (a current whose decline is abetted by the mounting betrayals of Mao), and the other, only tangentially touching the working class as it passes it on the road back to the reformist swamp.

With every day, it becomes clearer to blacks that the essence of nationalism must mean, in practice, the organizational independence of blacks. Increasingly, as this becomes clearer, the issue will pose itself as (1) organizational independence but seeking an alliance with white forces without submerging or submitting to these forces and (2) locating the correct allies, i.e., linking up with the working class as an independent force.

In one sense, this development (since it has ended, for the moment, mainly in the ranks of the DP) must appear a retreat from a one time higher ideological crest with an anti-capitalist awareness. But the failure to link up with the working class meant that the anti-capitalist mood (Carmichael as well as BPP) quickly arrived at a dead end, and even worse. Once however nationalism is conceived as consistent with and in fact unrealizable without an alliance with our class, then events even now in the offing will clearly make possible a new crest, on firmer class foundations.

Paralleling this development, this direction of the black movement, is the increasing awareness that the community control movement is a dead end for blacks. It is not that abstractly the issue was impermissible for us. Rather that, in the absence of a class program, the movement for community control quickly became the prisoner of the most conservative petty bourgeois, anti-working class elements, hence a mobilization with reactionary consequences.

Whether this was inevitable or not, the central fact to face now is that the community control movement, today, is in possession of the povertycrats who have led it back into the DP. It is this development -- the rise of a new layer of bureaucrats whose interests are institutional, not those of the ghetto -- which was responsible for the tragic confrontation in Newark.

The demand for community control cannot be placed in the same category as other demands such as the right to vote, or equality on the job, etc. These demands are wholly progressive and serve as instruments of self-mobilization which lend themselves to class implementation. The community control movement has, concretely, served to prevent such a mobilization which could assume a working class character.

LETTER TO DAVID M. -- DEC., 1971 -- Steve L.

I would like to offer an amendment to page 2 of your AFT resolution, "Democratic Schools." We should do more than "support student demands for a voice in their education . . ." The result of our desire for democratic schools should not be faculty-student-parent committees to run the schools, but student-teacher democracy either direct or through elected committees reflecting the numbers in the school (in other words, a school committee of 10 reflecting the school population of 90 students and 10 teachers would have 9 students and 1 teacher, etc.). The staff of the school should also have democratic control over its working conditions. This seems to me to be the only way schools could be democratic -- otherwise the direct participants don't have real power -- as opposed to voice or influence -- over their working conditions. Both students and teachers are analogous to workers in a factory. Students as well as teachers have to put up with conditions for 6-8 hours a day. It takes both students and teachers to have a school as opposed to a research center. We don't call for community-worker control of factories. (Of course, the community must democratically decide general resource allocation -- where factories are to be built, in general what they will produce, etc., but after this we call for workers' control, not community and workers' control). The basic difference comes from adult chauvanism and from our response to community control movements in the past. We are caught in a trap when we call for "student rights" and "voice in education" but refuse to carry this to its necessary conclusion, which is direct* student power over education. Of course teachers and parents will have a direct influence on education -- teachers through direct representatives and parents through their children and voice although not vote in internal school decisions. We don't, however, need to institutionalize these influences by setting up a parent-teacher-student committee each with equal power. This simply cannot be called democratic. If each group has equal power and students outnumber direct participants in the other groups 10-1, how can this be called democracy? Direct student-teacher democracy does work in "free schools" even in this non-democratic society now. After the revolution, it will be even more essential that student-teacher democracy prevail, since students will have to learn what real democracy is and how to use it if they are to be capable controllers of a socialist society. Sham democracy fits the sham democracy we have in the adult world. Real democracy in the schools will fit the real democracy we'll have under socialism.

As a transitional demand, I don't see the use of parent-teacher-student committees. How will we remove parents from the decision-making apparatus later? Rather our transitional demands should be aimed at more and more student-teacher control of the schools, and more and more rights for students and teachers until after the revolution students and teachers have full internal control of education.

In summary, I would advocate changing "we advocate control of the schools by committees of teachers, students, and parents," to "we advocate control of education in the schools by committees of teachers and students with election to these committees based on proportional representation of each group."

*By use of the word "direct" I don't mean necessarily "pure democracy" but either representative or "pure" democracy based on one direct participant - one vote.

DRAFT AMENDMENT TO PERSPECTIVES DOCUMENT BY DAVID M. -- Marilyn M., Ken P.

(This is to replace the entire Point 7.)

7. The IS and the United Action Caucus -- The UAC is a bureaucratically controlled caucus dominated by a coalition of opportunists (Roth, Simons, Davis, et al) and the CP, with a grouping of radicals and militants. It has no organized rank and file members nor do Roth and Co. wish it to have any. Specifically, when a caucus formed in California last fall for the purpose of intervening at the CFT (California Federation of Teachers) convention, they were not allowed to use the name United Action Caucus by the West Coast Regional Steering Committee of the UAC. There are no local caucuses, no activities, and no perspective toward intervening in struggles. In fact, the UAC only exists as an electoral machine for national conventions at this time. The leadership seeks to win local leaders to it with a "program" of opposition to Shanker's heavy-handedness, differences on merger with NEA, and criticism of Meany's leadership of the AFL-CIO. Because of the number of militants within the AFT, the UAC has a program on paper of opposition to wage-price controls, support for Angela Davis, and support for the strategy of mass action. But this program on paper does not constitute a program IN REALITY. The leadership has no intention of mobilizing support for its "program" among the ranks, nor does it fight to implement any part of it where it controls locals. In fact, it does not appear to have any idea of what it would do with it if it won control of the union. The seriousness of the program is exemplified by the fact that a section of the leadership favors supporting Miesen against Selden while the rest apparently favor Roth. The program then is merely a sop to the militants and radicals in the caucus. It also serves to differentiate the UAC from any typical caucus of "out" bureaucrats fighting to get "in". At the same time it does provide us with a lever to operate within the caucus where we have an audience of militants nationally.

The fact that the UAC is only a shell with no relation to the ranks limits its value for us as an arena. We can participate in its very limited debates which reach a very limited audience as we have done. But our orientation cannot be limited to this, or even primarily to this as it has been in the past year.

We should seek to build local caucuses where possible in which we raise our program (mass action, labor party, funding, etc.; see above) as appropriate. These caucuses should intervene on every level: grievances, union elections, community issues, and should affiliate with the UAC if that is possible. We will urge critical support of the UAC as the only national opposition with all its shortcomings.

Given our isolation in small locals, and especially in California organizing locals, this perspective is only semi-operative. (It is not very realistic to form these caucuses where the unions have no real power, and where the leadership is generally militant.) Comrades planning to remain in teaching should be encouraged to move to important locals/cities in accordance with priorities to be established by the fraction and in accordance with our other national priorities.

Concurrent with building local caucuses our perspective is to establish ourselves as a national left-pole within the UAC and AFT, and to make contact

with militants, especially blacks and other minorities. There are many militants in the union who are in and out of the UAC and who are disoriented. Thus there is a vacuum on the left where there is great potential for us to spread influence nationally and move significant numbers of people in our direction. At the present time the best way to begin this process is to launch a national newspaper/newsletter. Initially this will have to be based upon ourselves and others we are in contact with. Such a newsletter/newspaper would have no organization attached. At this time it would be premature to create an open structure for ourselves. It would appear, and in fact would be, sectarian in that it would unnecessarily create a barrier between ourselves and others in the caucus who see no need for such a sub-caucus, and who, in fact, accept us as a legitimate part of the caucus. This format will provide a context for our present scattered work in locals. The program of the paper should be our program for the AFT (not necessarily stated in a formal fashion) along with our labor program of labor off the pay board, etc. It should also take up questions of the role of education, student questions, and others. It will include a specific critique of the UAC in addition to its program for the AFT, all the while making it clear that we are critical supporters of the UAC. Our ultimate goal is of course to crystallize groupings around this perspective, although our prognosis is that this will not come about in the very near future.

This paper should come out of the Bay Area with collaboration of all comrades nationally. Its initiation will be dependent on the name/reputation of David M., and will also involve "acquiring" the UAC mailing lists. The exact format can be settled in the Bay Area after the decision has been made to implement the proposal.

Initially the paper will probably have a "California emphasis" due to the distribution of teachers and the CFT convention planned for May, 1972.

It is very important that we have this perspective operative before the St. Paul national convention so that we can have a vehicle for making contacts and a basis for our work in the UAC.

PROPOSED DRAFT OF A PROGRAM FOR THE UNITED ACTION CAUCUS OF CALIFORNIA

Joel J.

1. Organizing the California Federation of Teachers -- The CFT must allocate more money to assist organizing in the locals. It must provide funds for local and regional organizers selected by the local involved subject to approval by the CFT Executive Council and responsible to the locals. Benefits such as automobile insurance must be competitive with CTA benefits.
2. Action on the Funding Crisis Facing the Schools -- The CFT must fight within the AFT for action on massive federal aid to education to initiate a powerful national coalition willing to organize nationwide direct mass pressure in all forms up to and including nationwide mass demonstrations and job actions. On the state level the CFT must fight for a steeply graduated income tax and taxation of corporate profits to fund education, as an alternative to the regressive property or sales tax.
3. Anti-Strike Laws and Collective Bargaining -- The CFT must lead the fight by organizing an action conference of all public employee unions in California to plan a fight against such laws (specifically the Winton Act) by all means necessary including statewide mass actions and by electoral opposition to any candidate who opposes teachers' right to strike and collective bargaining.
4. Democracy in the Schools -- We support the principle of joint teacher-community selection of principals and school site administrators, and the determination of basic educational policies, to replace the present domination by the bureaucratic educational establishment. Further, the CFT must seek support from the community and work in cooperation with community groups on programs and actions fighting at the local and state level.
5. The Rights of Blacks and Other Minorities -- The CFT supports the just demands of blacks and other minorities for preferential hiring, for special programs such as black studies, and for the hiring of minority organizers for the CFT staff.
6. Women's Rights -- The CFT supports the demand for paid maternity leave without loss of seniority, specifically the right of women teachers to decide when to begin the leave and when to return; for child care facilities at or near the school site; for the hiring of women organizers for the CFT staff.
7. End Political Harrassment -- CFT must actively help in the defense of strikers, minority people, students, and war opponents against repression from whatever source.
8. Vietnam -- The CFT must join with other unions in fighting for immediate withdrawal from the war in Southeast Asia.
9. Wage/Price Freeze -- The CFT must actively fight the present wage/price freeze, and the institution of any future wage/price controls. To carry out this policy, the CFT urges no compliance with the wage freeze, calls for a one-day work stoppage and massive demonstration by labor against the freeze, and will fight for the payment of all wage increases due, specifically incremental steps, enforced by strike action if necessary.

10. Independent Political Action: For a Labor Party -- We believe that dependency on the politicians of both political parties has been demonstrated to be not in the best interests of the American labor movement as witness their joint continued refusal to provide federal aid for public schools, their opposition to public employee strikes, and their joint endorsement of wage/price controls. We therefore believe that the labor movement must establish a political party of all working people. Such a party would be the organizer and focus of mass actions by the labor movement in addition to electoral campaigns. Short of a political party, the CFT urges the running of independent campaigns by locals in conjunction with other rank and file groups for local offices such as school boards.

BAY AREA AFT FRACTION AMENDMENTS TO FIRST DRAFT AFT RESOLUTION BY DAVID M.

Page 3 - Add to end of No. 2: However, these isolated bargaining patterns also contribute to "local provinciality" which inhibits interest and participation in the union at the state and national levels.

Page 5, - Paragraph 3: Eliminate "(4) opposition to the freeze" and add: "(4) no administrators in the merged organization."

Page 6 - End of No. 5: Add, At all times, however, we point in the direction of a labor party through such proposals as independent campaigns on the local, state, and even national level. On the local level, we attempt to build acceptance for independent labor action by proposing that locals run candidates for local offices. Failing this, rank and file caucuses inside unions, with sufficient strength, in conjunction with militant unions, could launch such campaigns. This approach could be repeated at the state level. Furthermore, we should propose feasibility studies for a labor party on whatever level when the present situation forbids its agitational use.

Page 5 - End of No. 4: Add, Within the unorganized districts, as in California, IS members should be encouraged to play secondary leadership roles in their locals. Because of the small size and weakness of these locals, we will naturally be thrust forward as leaders more for our organizational ideas and skills than our political program. Special care must be taken to counteract the conservatizing pressures in this situation. Yet, to abstain from this role would be a disservice both to the needs of the union and to the possibility of extending acceptance of our politics.

For IS members to assume the presidency of such locals is riskier and advisable only in a local with (1) a left-leaning membership open to our program and (2) an organized caucus and/or group of activists who are prepared to carry out that program. Factors such as attitudes toward IPA may or may not be a decisive factor, depending upon the situation (e.g. an election year). The minimal program should include:

1. A militant organizing effort in the schools
2. Fullest democracy in the local
3. Political opposition to AFT leadership and state leadership
4. Cooperation with other public employee unions at all levels
5. Recognition of the need for mass action at all levels for funding, right to strike, CB.
6. Need for teacher-parent-student alliances in action
7. No support to Republican or Democratic Party candidates.

AMENDMENT ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS TO DAVID M DRAFT ON AFT PERSPECTIVES

March 1, 1972 -- Margaret J.

The oppression of women in society is reflected in the school. A successful union program for women's liberation could make gains for thousands of women teachers, help the union grow, and indirectly help the millions of female students in the public schools. Women's caucuses presently exist in rather minimal forms at the national level in the AFT and on a state level in several states. Our women members are active in these caucuses, and are helping the caucuses develop on a perspective which can lead to fights for the rights of thousands of women public school teachers. While we support the women teachers in higher education in their fight for equal hiring opportunity and equal pay, we should be clear that this struggle should not be a major priority for the caucus, rather the caucus struggles should focus on the rights of the public school teachers and those of the women in the working class communities where we may work.

IS women should not make women's issues their only activity. It is important that our women comrades develop themselves in all major areas of debate. There may be a time when many IS comrades should be very active in the women's arena. Right now the activity of the caucuses does not warrant this. In areas where we have several women teachers (such as the Bay Area) one woman should be chosen to be active in the caucus while other comrades should be expected to write articles for newsletters or do other support work when needed. IS women in areas where no caucus exists should constantly be raising the issues of the caucus and be trying to make contacts. They may find that women's issues are good for bringing together an active left group. At all times we should keep in touch and be thinking in terms of a communication network necessary for a national caucus.

Our program for the women's caucus falls into two categories. First a program for women's equality in the union. While putting forward these demands we must encourage women to take an active role in the leadership of the union. The second part of our program consists of demands which the union should be fighting for in districts all over the country.

Women's Demands for Equality Within the Union

1. An official committee for women's rights to be democratically elected by women present at the national convention.
2. The right of minority as well as majority members of the committee to publish in the union press.
3. Preferential hiring of women organizers approved by the committee.

AFT Demands for Equality of Women Teachers

1. Elementary preparation periods. The vast majority of elementary teachers (overwhelmingly women) teach a longer working day than secondary teachers (overwhelmingly men). We demand equal pay for equal work.
2. Paid parental leave.
3. Adequate childcare facilities for teachers and the surrounding community.
4. Equal hiring opportunity.
5. End to sexual tracking in the schools.

DRAFT STRATEGY AND PERSPECTIVE TOWARD THE UAC AND THE NATIONAL AFT

WITH ANALYSIS OF THE PAST YEAR -- APRIL 1, 1972 -- Marilyn and Ken P.

I. Background and Analysis of the Current Problem

The AFT fraction has wound up in as isolated corner due to past mistakes and oversights. A history and analysis of the past year with particular emphasis on our relationship to the United Action Caucus (UAC) should help us to understand the full ramifications of these errors and our present situation, thus making it possible to begin to remedy these mistakes and propose a new direction.

The UAC was an outgrowth or amalgam of the New Caucus, the Black Caucus, and some bureaucrats who split from the Progressive Caucus of Seldon, Shanker. The IS played a key role in this amalgamation, especially in the initial negotiations between the New Caucus and the bureaucrats. Several IS'ers, including Steve Z., Joel J., and Ed W. had played an important role in the New Caucus. This caucus initially had included some blacks, but by 1970 was a rather small grouping of white radicals and militants, which played primarily an educational role during the convention in 1970. It did, however, give us a base upon which to attempt to build a more viable rank and file caucus in keeping with our general perspective. Meanwhile, the leadership Progressive Caucus headed by Shanker of the large New York City local and Seldon, current President, experienced some defections. The split in the bureaucracy was generally a result of (1) a tightening up and conservative drift in the caucus, and (2) a general crisis in education which weakened the AFT's ability to continue to grow through "pure and simple" unionism. In particular, two vice presidents, William Simons, president of the Washington, D.C. local, and Herrick Roth, president of the Colorado State AFL-CIO, broke with Shanker/Seldon over questions of racism and heavy-handedness. During this time developments brought forward the fusion of the New Caucus and the Black Caucus. Carole Graves, president of the Newark local, was involved in a militant strike in which she had to fight not only the school board and Newark's black mayor, but a small but vocal black opposition led by Leroi Jones in the name of community control. Realizing she needed help, and now also developing opposition to the whole concept of black caucuses because of this negative experience with black nationalism, Graves began to lead the Black Caucus in the direction of an alliance with the New Caucus. She was aided in this by the Communist Party who now saw the chance to build an opposition more to their liking (conservative) to Shanker et al.

By August all the ingredients for the amalgamation were ready. What was needed was a catalyst, someone or group that could bridge the gap between the New Caucus/Black Caucus fusion and the dissident bureaucrats. It was primarily the IS which played this role. Comrade Steve Z. met with Roth and Simons, who together with lesser bureaucrats and the Communist Party, decided to attempt to capture the support of the left as a base from which to oppose the leadership. At this meeting a program was hammered out (see attached) which was largely written by Steve. This program included opposition to wage/price controls, which had not yet been announced. It was on the basis of this program that the amalgamation was accomplished. The fraction expressed skepticism about the viability of such a formation, but the question of program and their acceptance of it together with the hope that the split in the bureaucracy represented an opportunity

for us to build an opposition caucus which could have more effect on the union, counterbalanced that skepticism somewhat. It is clear now that the skepticism was correct. Our attitude should have been that while splits in the bureaucracy are a positive development indicating the weaknesses at the top, and often provide new opportunities or credibility for a rank and file movement, we do not therefore negotiate with the splitters to place them at the lead of the rank and file movement. If they accept the program on paper, we still do not support their leadership. Instead, we offer leadership to those we think will work to build the type of rank and file caucus we want to see. To do otherwise is to turn over the support of the militants within the union and the caucus to a few bureaucrats.

During the convention our role inside the caucus was one of mild opposition to the barely left of center politics of the caucus. Our main act consisted of trying to get a labor party statement in the program which, of course, we lost. Other than that we spent the entire time in the caucus attempting to hold them to the program, especially when Nixon so conveniently announced the wage/price freeze during the convention. At no time did we criticize the caucus leaders, despite the fact that the primary face of the caucus was its campaigns for Vice President and delegate to the AFL-CIO, in which no issues at all were raised aside from the general heavy-handedness of Shanker et al. The fact that we were uncritically supporting these "bureaucrats without a home" with only token opposition meant that to the extent we were having an impact on the militants at the convention, it was negative.

After the convention we had two national fractions with good representation. During the perspectives discussion our lack of real opposition during the convention was raised. The issue of what kind of presence we would have nationally became a central issue, especially in the light of the fact that the caucus was a convention caucus which would have little or no life after the convention and until the next convention if it could manage to stay together. Several comrades suggested that we attempt to build a left opposition inside the caucus around the IS and our perspective. This could be done by putting out a newsletter and sending it to the UAC mailing list which Steve could get. This position was amended to say that we would do this if we could not use the UAC newsletter that was supposed to come out regularly and be open to members. The UAC newsletter never came out. Since the convention, the life of the UAC has been minimal, and has consisted mainly of gearing up for the election for AFT president. Activities include defending the Newark teachers and organizing opposition to Shanker's open ballot referendum. They have rarely raised any parts of the program or carried out any effective campaigns of action along those lines in the locals they control. Moreover, they opposed the setting up of any local caucuses, and prevented us from initiating one in California with the same name. This has been recently reversed, and in California an arch-bureaucrat together with the Communist Party have initiated one to prepare for the California State convention at the end of May. Their expressed position is to build a "realistic" caucus, as opposed to a principled one, which could challenge seriously the leadership and maybe even win.

The Miesen candidacy then is not so surprising in light of this past. A little background: Ken Miesen is president of the Minnesota AFT and ran for president of the national AFT two years ago. He barely lost to Seldon, with

only the New Caucus opposing him. His differences with the leadership are based primarily on his hysterical opposition to merger of any kind with the NEA. Now he is making another bid for president, and determined to garner as much support as possible prior to the convention. Thus in March he appeared at a UAC steering committee meeting to ask for UAC endorsement. The Miesen forces were in strength at the meeting, and the opportunism is extreme. Although they oppose most of the Caucus's program and openly, they voted for the program. Following this "acceptance" of the program, the Steering Committee voted to endorse him for President with 3 abstentions (Steve Z., one other, and Carole Graves, because she did not want to be on record against the national leadership). In summation, the UAC endorsed a bureaucrat with no committment in any sense of the word to the program, and no idea of attempting to implement the program if he did win. Never was a case of "out" bureaucrats using anything to get "in" so clear. This applies not only to Miesen, but also to Simons, Roth, and others who are loyally supported by the Communist Party.

The IS role in the caucus during the past year has been dismal. We did not put out the newsletter when the UAC failed to do so. No attempt was made to get the mailing list. In reality this is everyone's fault since those who strongly pushed for this perspective did not follow through. It's an indication of our general sloppiness, and the reluctance of some, especially Steve, to play a real opposition in the caucus. In fact, our only role has been that of Steve who is on the UAC eleven-person Steering Committee. This role left much to be desired. Among the errors made are the following: the writing of a proposed leaflet on independent political action which did not raise any organizational form (labor party or otherwise); pushing for a secret ballot referendum as opposed to one on proportional representation in opposition to Shanker's open ballot one, which was the position of the fraction (there is some confusion on this position, and the above is my belief, unfortunately the minutes of that meeting have been misplaced); and lastly, abstaining on the question of Miesen for president and proposing our not openly opposing him in the UAC at this time. (See attached documents: draft leaflet on IPA and Report of Steve Z. on the endorsement Steering Committee meeting.)

II. The IS Conception of the Make-Up and Role of Rank and File Caucuses

Our perspective and strategy of building rank and file caucuses in the unions has nothing in common with the UAC, which is little more than an unholy coalition at the top in a grab for union offices and power between middle of the road bureaucrats with no base and the Communist Party. In contradistinction to this conception, we pose our conception of building rank and file caucuses based upon militants active on the local (shop floor) level, fighting for programs which range from concrete positions in the area of working conditions to more general political issues such as political action, the war, the economy, racism, sexism, etc. These caucuses are a place where we can build the class struggle from the bottom up, and begin to politicize rank and file militancy and give it form and organization so that it can have an effect. The issues are more than just union democracy, although workers struggle for control of their unions is important. They range all the way from struggle around working conditions to wages to the ultimate question of state power. Anything else is not only a

Draft Strategy
April 1, 1972

- 4 -

Marilyn M.
Ken P.

waste of time, but a betrayal of our politics of workers control, proletarian democracy, and a Marxist understanding of how consciousness is raised.

III. The Future: Strategy and Perspective

Thus, we have worked ourselves into a corner. By playing little opposition in this caucus, being a key in its formation, and by having no independent presence in the AFT aside from individuals, we find ourselves more isolated than ever.

We must begin to remedy this by building (beginning immediately) an opposition to the Miesen candidacy and to the whole coalition conception of a rank and file caucus. This will be difficult, because of the program question and the personality issue. (We do not want our opposition to appear to be only based upon him personally.) The fact that Miesen agreed to the program has been used to say "How can we attack him?". This same reasoning of course applies to the original discussions with Roth and Simons on the formation of the caucus. Thus, our opposition can only be done if we make clear what we mean by a rank and file caucus, and what we would like to see in the future. We must build around that rather than some program which can be written, agreed to, and substantially forgotten once it has played its role of being the basis for coalition. All of which goes to show that the question of program is only part of the problem of caucuses, and their self-conception, leadership, and make-up is an equally, if not more, important part of the problem.

Our political position of open opposition to the Miesen candidacy and the leadership and direction of the UAC opens the question of an organizational break, but does not settle it. The tactical question of splitting from the UAC is an open one at this time, though it is likely our position will lead to our leaving the caucus if for no other reason that we will be forced out because of our opposition to its candidate(s). In making a fight around the direction and candidate(s) of the caucus, we should establish ourselves as a pole to which other militants can be attracted. The fight will then be made in the name of this broader opposition. If we are successful in winning a significant section of the caucus, we will be in a position to offer an alternative leadership to that of the UAC; however this is not likely. Short of this, our attitude toward remaining in the UAC is conditioned by the effect of our leaving/staying on the rank and file supporters of the UAC, and, of course, specifically conditioned by the number we could take out with us. One likely possibility is that we would choose to stay in the caucus, functioning with an informal caucus or caucus-within-a-caucus until and unless the UAC leaders move to force us out. At that time we could insist on our support of the UAC program, support unmatched by some of the leaders and candidates, as our defense. The possibilities are too numerous and speculative to determine a course in advance. In no event, however, will we form a formally-constituted "national caucus" based on ourselves and little more.

As our primary vehicle for implementing this strategy we propose to establish a national newspaper/magazine. This publication will not be attached to any formal organization, but will be an organ of ourselves and those who generally share our viewpoint within the union. The conception presented here of the

Draft Strategy
April 1, 1972

- 5 -

Marilyn M.
Ken P.

publication and the reasons it is a necessary and valuable tool are independent of what happens at the convention and whether or not we remain in the UAC. Even if we remain in the UAC as "critical supporters," we still need a vehicle for spreading our viewpoint and influence.***

This publication is to provide the political context for our AFT work, which is presently rather scattered and uncoordinated. It will be a means of spreading our influence and presence far beyond the limitations imposed by our physical presence, since we can distribute it in other locals, to the UAC lists, etc., and we can begin to build a network of collaborators and sympathizers. Through contacts and collaborators we should be able to have a presence in some of the key locals that we are now totally isolated from. It is also an effective way of making contacts and involving them in our work directly.

The political program of the publication need not be elaborated here. It should be our general program for labor (e.g., see Brian Mackenzie labor document) and our general program for the AFT-in-particular (e.g., see Steve's document on AFT). This needs no more elaboration since there is substantial agreement on the subject (apparently). We may wish to make some immediately-operative portions of this program explicit at first (e.g., "where we stand") or we may wish to leave it implicit. Of course, any local caucuses and groupings we may be able to crystallize may be formed on a somewhat lower programmatic level.

The content of the publication will include (1) articles on general issues before the AFT, such as the "Million Dollar (COPE) Fund" and political action, merger in New York State and elsewhere, community control, etc., (2) news-and-analysis articles on current issues such as the Portland situation, Newark, various strikes, New Directions Caucus in Oakland, etc., (3) articles on issues before the labor movement, such as wage controls, right to strike, etc., and (4) articles dealing with educational issues, such as democracy in the schools, student issues, teaching techniques, etc. In general we would aim some articles at UAC supporters, pointing out the role of the UAC leadership, etc. We should have a strong emphasis on racism and the concerns of black teachers, and attempt to use this vehicle to reach black teachers (probably one of our more likely areas for black recruitment is among teachers).

Some details and specifics

(1) Resources: The IS has a small but politically experienced and competent cadre within the AFT who have the ability and numbers to produce a quality publication. Moreover, we have a periphery and influence beyond our numbers and

***In the past we have had too much of a "convention perspective," and have placed too much emphasis on the conventions themselves, rather than seeing them as occasions to make contacts and spread our influence. We think we have done this partly out of not knowing what else can be done outside the local level. It seems that the proposal here for a newspaper will make it possible for us to both organize on a local level where we are strong and spread our influence throughout the entire year.

Draft Strategy
April 1, 1972

- 6 -

Marilyn M.
Ken P.

and should be able to involve others in writing and distributing from the beginning, including contacts in significant locals in which we have no direct presence. (It will be important to attract outside contributors also to insure against the charge of "IS front" within the UAC circles.)

Specific editorial work and production work could be handled in either the Bay Area or in the NYC area. An attempt should be made to get collaborators involved in this work as well from the beginning. (Quite likely in at least the Bay Area, probably both).

(2) Format: Suggested frequency is monthly; suggested format is that of the old Independent Socialist in its pre-tabloid days. To be sold for some small price, and with subscriptions can probably be self-supporting or close to it.

(3) Target date should be in time for first issue to be at national convention with a good selection of material aimed at the convention, and of course it should be made clear in issue number one that it isn't just a convention thing but a continuing publication. Its relationship to the UAC (i.e., "in" or "out") need not be specified initially. We should consider the specific lining-up of collaborators a priority at the convention.

It's our estimation that a perspective such as this will be very successful in multiplying our weight in the union and developing a large number of contacts nationally. This is especially true given the present vacuum on the left in the union and given the attitude of the CP in particular. However, to implement a national perspective, of course, means the active involvement of all comrades nationally. We hope that all comrades involved in AFT work will discuss this and give us some feedback in the near future.

Response To Berkeley Draft On A.F.T.

David Miller June 1, 1972

The draft thesis by M & K on AFT work and the motion to the NAC by the I. S. fraction in Berkeley reflect residual sectarianism in the I. S. on the trade union question, a sectarianism which will unfortunately recur as long as we remain, as we are, on the fringe of the labor movement, and as long as the contradiction between the ripening objective circumstances and our own miniscule capabilities persist.

There is general agreement in our ranks that a top priority for socialists is participation in the construction of a left wing in the labor movement. More, we must see this as the key to our ability to transcend the stage of the sect. The organization will rise or fall to a large extent through its ability to avoid the ultra-left and opportunist errors in relation to emergent rebel forces in the unions. Our functioning in the United Action Caucus (UAC) will test this ability.

The UAC started as an ideological group of radicals, left-liberals, and some blacks, which was able to have some impact on the AFT for historic reasons (the democratic and social-democratic traditions, even stronger than those of the UAW). But the UAC's growth was of necessity limited due to the lack of a gut issue facing a growing and successful union during the 1960s.

The first break came with the black question. Precipitated by the 1968 strike, the union bureaucracy began to move perceptibly to the right. Two immediate consequences ensued: (1) a black caucus was formed, but one totally devoid of any program; (2) Shanker precipitated a struggle against all critics, however muted, resulting in a split, actually an expulsion, not based on any clearly defined differences (and even of questionable "necessity" for Shanker). Among the expelled were two vice-presidents of the national union: the black president of the Washington Teachers Union, William Simons, and the leader of the Colorado union, a left-liberal bureaucrat, Herrick Roth.

These expulsions, and the move of a section of the black caucus back toward a class orientation (under the impact of the Newark strike), brought qualitatively new forces into the UAC. In the absence of any program of their own, the program we provided (except for the labor party clause) became the program of the larger body, even though many of these new elements, with their empiricist tradition, did not believe the program was actually realizable. (Nevertheless, when faced with the wage freeze crisis in the midst of the last AFT convention, even these new forces were compelled to agree to demand, publicly, that the AFT call upon Meany to organize a one day work stoppage against the freeze.)

The entry of these new forces produced a qualitative change in the strength and appeal of the caucus. At the same time, however, it changed the balance of forces in the UAC, and made it inevitable that this new layer would assume the leadership and responsibility for the caucus. We did not contest this development organizationally at this stage, and correctly, too. Instead, we retreated to the position of left opposition within the caucus (around the labor party, demands that the caucus press its own line, demands for an inter-convention life for the caucus through a regular press, etc.) It is this policy which M&K designate one of "surrender" of the ranks to the bureaucrats.

By the following year, as we anticipated, the crisis in the schools (jobs, funds) had brought a second, even more fundamental question to the fore in the union, namely, the need for a strategy to meet the new crisis.

Not surprisingly (to some of us) the leadership (not just the bureaucracy -- the two are not identical) split on this question. As a result, a second wing of the union, largely secondary leadership (local presidents, state officers, etc.) moved toward that leadership layer which had previously been expelled because of its position on union democracy and the black question, and entered the UAC.

The gut issue precipitating this new split is that of merger (complicated by the subjective personal ambitions of Meisen, UAC presidential nominee -- that is how things occur in the real world).

One wing of the union, the right, led by Shanker, sees in merger a substitute for strike action, a mechanism for submerging the union totally in the morass of parliamentary politics, as a means of solving the crisis of state and federal funding of the schools. The other wing, in a sectarian reaction (sectarianism is not the exclusive property of the left) resists the merger on the grounds that it does not really provide a solution, as indeed it does not IF its content is Shanker's. But this wing, like all sectarians, lacks the confidence in the class to see merger as a road to heightened, escalated class struggle involving large masses. Lacking this confidence, and rightly mistrustful of Shanker's "solution" as a panacea, they opt for the politics of paralysis, for the status quo, and are thus naked before Shanker's attack.

Given this necessary capsule history of the UAC, what course do we propose?

Our tasks in the UAC are at this stage primarily political. That is, our focus must be on the key issues facing the convention -- merger and political action.

On merger. This is the key to any successful strategy for teachers today. In view of the near futility of local bargaining, the inability of the locals, due to the fiscal crisis, to avoid cuts in staff as well as salary, merger (or, transitionally, a united front strategy is the pre-condition for realizing the tactic of state-wide and national strikes on money, right to strike, etc. The UAC, offering only negative, sectarian opposition, has no strategy for the union today, and will therefore be unable to resist Shanker's proposals and the reactionary content he will give them. The need and the vacuum are so great that, if we keep our eye on the ball, we should be able to have a genuine measure of impact, on a decisive question, in the caucus and in the convention. (How to do this is what we should be discussing, not the "issues" raised by the M&K document).

Political action. The official UAC line on this is a relatively progressive one -- endorsement of any candidate who supports the freeze, the war, anti-strike laws, binding arbitration, etc. It will be near impossible for them to stick to this clause, given the political pressure to which they will be submitted. It is our responsibility, and opportunity, to insist that they do, and to raise the labor party demand (which will be before the convention by resolution).

If the left is to have a real, not a literary or sectarian presence in the AFT, it must be today through identification with and organization around these two issues (centrally).

not with issues which can only appear to other caucus members (including the radicals in it) as "organizational" or "personal".

It is only in this context that the question of Meisen's candidacy is worth discussing. And more, seen in this context, it becomes clear how subordinate the issue is, and how unfortunate that so much effort is being diverted because of it.

Turning now to the M&K document itself. The document attributes a lengthy series of errors to the conduct of the I. S. fraction during and since the last convention. For the most part, the charges are based on factual errors on M&K's part, while the remaining criticisms merit discussion, given their proper, secondary, weight.¹

We will therefore pass on to the central question raised by the document. It takes the form of insisting that the Meisen candidacy (not the program) is a split issue for us. M&K insist that the I. S. must openly and forcefully oppose Meisen's nomination and, presumably refuse to vote for him, even if that results in our exclusion from the caucus.

On what grounds do they propose we oppose him? Not his personality, of course. Not on the news that he does not really support our program (for neither, in a sense, do Roth, Simons, Graves, in reality). He agrees to run on the UAC platform which by all

1. Thus, it is not true that no effort was made to get the mailing list of the UAC. We did not succeed. That is bad enough. Only misguided polemical zeal could convert this failure into one of intent.

Again, mention is made of a politically objectionable position paper on IPA, and the paper is reproduced. Unfortunately, no mention is made of the fact that this paper was preliminary, and was submitted to the fraction for its consideration. Changes were suggested and were fully incorporated. Why then do M&K print the preliminary draft instead of the final one?

And again, the charge is made that no UAC bulletin appeared (as if it were our fault that the pledge was not fully honored), when in fact, to be fair, two issues of the UAC bulletin did appear. The first carried a long article on merger expressing our view; the second issue was, properly, devoted to an effort to combat Shanker's bureaucratic effort to eliminate the secret ballot from the AFT constitution. This too is ignored, as if it were of no consequence to us. The only issue we did not succeed in getting into the UAC bulletin (because they ceased appearing) was our political action position (the corrected position).

Incidentally, the refusal of M&K to support the secret ballot in the AFT is of a piece with the entire spirit which animates their document. Rigid, doctrinaire, mechanical to the core. We all understand the question of secret or open ballot is not one of principle. In a strike vote or settlement, we urge open ballot if it means, as it usually does, that the militants are more likely to prevail. (That is why the government prefers secret strike votes). But the open ballot in the AFT plays a different role, and that is why Shanker want it. (For the same reason that the open ballot is the norm in the most bureaucratic union conventions). His caucus enrolls fully 60% of the delegates at a convention, but many join only out of coercion, overt or covert. Consequently, on the convention floor, because of the secret ballot, Shanker often loses, despite his caucus' binding discipline. Not to understand that, at this time, the left needs the protection of the secret ballot, not for itself perhaps, but for others (as the very concrete experiences of the California delegates at their last state convention attests) is the height of formalist, mechanical judgment.

norms is one on which even we could run with honor. They propose to fight his nomination on the ground that he, and the caucus, do not share our conception of a rank & file caucus. Thus, "the fact that Meisen agreed to the program has been used to say 'how can we attack him!'. This same reasoning of course applies to the original discussions with Roth and Simons on the formation of the caucus. Thus, our opposition can only be done if we make clear what we mean by a rank & file caucus, and what we would like to see in the future. We must build around that rather than some program.."

But if this is the case, why the big deal about Meisen? It is the caucus as a whole which is rotten to the core and must be opposed. We can, by their reasoning, support none of the UAC candidates, much less participate in the slate ourselves (a possibility if we sought it).

This is undiluted Spartacist League ultimatism.

A layer of the leadership, mostly local presidents, and a layer of the ranks begin to break with the union establishment, in a generally left direction, unevenly it is true, as is to be expected, and M&K tell them that unless they accept our correct conception of a rank & file caucus, we cannot work with them, or make a united front with them against Shanker. Since M&K recognize that their course could result in our exclusion from the caucus, the authors are, in effect, proposing that we isolate ourselves from these militants on grounds which, because they are not recognizably political or programmatic, will not be understood by those undeniably rank & file delegates who will be present, not even by those delegates with an avowedly left orientation, who will be in the caucus.

One source of the dead-end to which M&K push the fraction is rooted in a totally textbook, abstract definition of a rank & file caucus (R&F). In what sense is the UAC a R&F caucus?

In the first place, it is necessary to distinguish between national and local caucuses. Even on the local level, while in general we advocate R&F caucuses, we do not create them at all times and places, as formal bodies (the form and even existence of caucuses depends upon the size of locals, the existence of organized opposition, the nature of the opposition, the problems and tactics facing the local, the reaction of an unsophisticated membership to caucuses, etc., etc.) In many cases in the AFT we will find known radicals or principled militants in the leadership of locals, and often uncontested. Are such leaderships by definition bureaucrats if they do not rest upon a formally organized caucus? Do we identify leaders as bureaucrats indiscriminately? No one closely acquainted with the AFT (whose median membership among collective bargaining locals is about 4 to 500) can fail to know that many of the delegates from such locals are in the best sense of that term the rank & file leaders of the teachers in their districts, even if they do not share our program, today. They are still full time teachers despite holding office, in contact with, and often responsive to their ranks. We know the pressures upon them and the dangers, but to lump them automatically as bureaucrats because they lack a R&F caucus is phrasemongering. It is time we ceased substituting slogans for concrete analysis.

On a national scale, the situation is different, but even here, not by 180°. The delegate from the average local is usually a teacher "from the production line" (and one who often pays a part or even all his or her own convention expenses.) But there is also present nationally another layer to which the term bureaucrat must be applied. This is

one, usually, from the larger city locals and state officials, possessed of extensive apparatus, full time organizers and officers, well paid, with a stake in their jobs which is qualitatively different from that of the small local leaders (who often serve because no one else will). This layer includes even leaders such as Roth. These bureaucrats dread nothing so much as being sent back into the classroom. Their interests are no longer identical with those of the teachers and, by a thousand corrupting threads, they tend to weave ties with the establishment which compromise their role as class leaders, and convert them into bureaucrats.

In the AFT, the UAC is still preponderantly composed of small locals. If Graves, Simons have weight in it, it is not exclusively because of the number of votes they control but because they have prestige as leaders and blacks who dared to oppose the establishment on principled grounds. (They would even today be welcomed back into Shanker's camp, with honors, if they chose).

Their presence in the UAC does not of itself convert the UAC into a bureaucratic swamp. It is their low political level, their lack of program, their provinciality (which disarm them and will make it difficult for them, in the long run, to resist the attractiveness of a bureaucratic existence, and to refuse to pay the price) which are the dangers today.

Toward them, and even more, toward the many local leaders at the convention who oppose Shanker, we cannot offer ultimata about the need for rank & file caucuses in their locals (in the case of Newark and Washington, right-wing opposition caucuses already exist), or about the need to make the UAC into a membership organization which includes teachers who do not attend conventions. We are right to talk of it and press it, but we must also recognize that the need still appears abstract to most of them. It is only as clearly defined programmatic differences take root, and appear relevant to those ranks (as, for example, when they recognize the impotence of local bargaining and the need for state-wide and national strikes, etc.) that interest and concern with national and state AFT problems will grow and attain real roots among the ranks. We can accelerate this process, but we cannot substitute our consciousness for it.

Viewed from this perspective, a split in the UAC on the grounds that it is not a R&F caucus would be a macabre joke, on us. We would be talking past the teachers, not to them.

Nevertheless, it is on this issue of rank & filism, disguised as the "Meisen candidacy" (one can never really be sure which is cause and which effect in such cases) that M&K do propose a split. What then should our attitude be toward Meisen's candidacy?

Two years ago, when the then New Caucus was "ours", i. e. when we, as part of its leadership, had to take responsibility for the caucus, we decided not to endorse Meisen because he ran on one issue alone (anti-merger) and refused to organize a caucus or slate, much less support us.

Today, it is not our caucus. Everyone knows we are a left minority in it. Everyone also knows, or will know, that we oppose Meisen. (He certainly has no illusions on that score). Despite Steve's formal abstention on the caucus steering committee vote, in the absence of any other candidate, no one there doubted or read the vote as anything

but a vote against him. But a vote at the same time which left our options open, which left the choice of remaining in the caucus ours to make, not theirs.

Today, in this matter, the following options seem open to us: We can vote NO, abstain, give critical support, vote yes in the caucus. No principle is involved in making this choice -- no secret or unspoken difference exists as to whether Meisen or any other candidate put up by the UAC is capable of carrying out that program (THAT would be a real difference worth fighting about). The choice depends upon which course will permit us the greatest ability to influence the politics, ideology of the group or elements in it. Any course which, at this time, leads to a separation from the caucus would hinder this process and should be rejected.

To urge a NO vote on Meisen means either (1) we propose someone else (we are not strong enough to compel someone else to run), or (2) in effect urge the caucus to dissolve. Since M&K consider the other possible candidates "no different" from Meisen (how simplistic concrete analysis is for them), they are in effect calling for the UAC to dissolve. No one there will "understand" that.

Others among us may choose to say "No" to Meisen, but propose Roth or Graves. But apart from the fact that both refuse to run, it is not our place to propose them.

M&K might, of course, urge the UAC to run no one, but to continue as a caucus nonetheless. To a group the size of the UAC, imbued with the traditions and norms of American unionists who want and expect real opposition groups, not just propaganda grouplets, this too would be tantamount to calling for the UAC to dissolve. Nothing would be more misunderstood, or more readily guarantee our isolation and rejection as a group of sectarian outsiders, indifferent to real needs and problems of the AFT today.

A second course would be "critical support" -- i. e., deplore Meisen's candidacy but announce we will vote for him and the slate on the convention floor as an act of solidarity with the caucus. Such a principled position would be respected, even if considered stratospheric. But it suffers from the difficulty that if one is not to attack Meisen personally, and if he insists he will run on the caucus platform, it will be impossible to justify our vote without attacking the caucus itself (as, in effect, M&K would do) on the grounds that it is not truly a rank & file caucus -- a position which would not so much outrage the caucus as be incomprehensible to them.

Thirdly, we could officially and publicly abstain, but with a statement whose difficulties are no different from option 2 above.

We are left with the alternative that we not oppose Meisen in the caucus (and in the convention against Shanker's man, Selden) in the absence of other candidates, and convey our views through our actions on the caucus floor -- by the political issues we raise, by our demands upon him and the caucus that they act upon the program on the convention floor, in its literature, and after the convention, and in personal contacts.

Unencumbered by ideas or principles, and because of the political weakness of Roth, Graves and Simons, Meisen will, in August, stand as the electoral representative of a bloc (an unstable one, which may well not last beyond the convention), not of our making, between the center and the so-called "left" -- a bloc which we are not responsible

for, and which, however weak, unreliable, and incapable of meeting its own goals, offers, today, in the minds of the ranks, the possibility of at least momentarily resisting the AFT's drift to the right. In a fraternal way, we must find ways of expressing support for that effort, while at the same time revealing its limitations.

The position of M&K on Meisen would not merit such extensive response were it not for a second misconception which it conceals, and upon which it rests.

At the last AFT convention, K, and not he alone, was profoundly critical of the entire conduct of the I. S. fraction. He insisted upon the need for an "I. S. presence"² at the convention, meaning that it was necessary to have open I. S. -AFT speakers, I. S.-AFT bulletins distributed to the convention. As if fighting for the UAC platform, inside and outside the caucus, and fighting for IPA were not establishing an I. S. presence, especially among the radicals present. (We submitted a pro-labor party resolution to the caucus signed by 24 delegates and received 44 votes for it). (There was also an I. S. literature table).

This desperate impatience to shove the full I. S. politics in the face of everyone -- no matter how alienating and counterproductive it might be -- this false imperative that we must say all, at all times, to all people, is not, unfortunately, new to our movement. It must be resisted if we are ever to master the immeasurably difficult task of moving masses of workers, and, yes, even some of their leaders, to the left.

There is still a third issue which, while not expressly put forward by M&K, is implicit in their view and which merits open discussion in our ranks today. That is, a more concrete, less abstract delineation of the path through which a left wing in the unions will be formed, and our relation to these left wings.

We are all clear on the ideal path, the one we would like -- local and national caucuses based on R&F committees, essentially. Under certain conditions this optimum path

2. It is this fearfulness about the lack of an I. S. "presence" which is also concealed in the proposal by M&K for a magazine or newspaper (by August). No one questions the desirability of a publication of the AFT-left. But questions do arise about such problems as: the nature of the publication; its relation to the caucus; availability of forces to write and DISTRIBUTE.

As to the nature of the publication, the format now proposed by them is not objectionable. However it cannot be divorced from their overall sectarian attack on the UAC. This is not an abstract proposition. For some months, previously, they have advocated an independent publication, but one aimed, if I understand them correctly (since it was never put on paper) not at the caucus, or as an instrument of the caucus-left, but rather as a paper aimed at the radicals in the AFT, especially in California (the most atypical region of the AFT, due to the lack of collective bargaining contracts). If M&K have changed their minds, and now really favor a newspaper aimed at the UAC (more correctly its real constituency), i. e. a left-wing union paper, we welcome the change. But if this is so, then all the more reason to find a way to stay in the UAC, and, if possible, produce the paper as an organ of part of the UAC, say, the UAC-NY, or, say, "UAC members for merger and a labor party", etc. In this form, it may be more reasonable to expect a wider participation and distribution. We do not need another publication in which we speak to ourselves.

can actually materialize. It is what we fight for as M&K rightly observe (if only they knew how). Its materialization, and maturation, however, depend not only on the objective situation, but also partly on the subjective dimension, on us, and groups like us.

Understanding this, we must also understand that in real life, the road to left-wing caucuses may be a more torturous one. For example -- at some stage, and under conditions of consciousness and degree of crisis such as existed in the U.S. during the 1960s, rank & file discontent can be expressed through fights within the bureaucracy which, fearful of that discontent, takes the path of palace coups d'etat. This is what happened in Steel, Rubber, and may even be brewing today in the UAW. While not insignificant, such "preventative-left" developments have and can produce very little, and we say so to the ranks.

But real life is not restricted to norms or black and white alternatives. Developments which are neither pure R&F nor pure splits in the bureaucracy can also arise, depending on the intensity of the crisis in the country and union, on the "democratic" traditions and history of the union, and on the degree of presence of radical forces, etc.

Some insensitivity to this possibility stems in part from the fact that the role and definition of the union bureaucracy receives an at times excessively simplistic formulation among us. Thus, while it is analytically essential to speak of the bureaucracy as "agents of the capitalist class", that description is insufficient to provide us with our tactical as opposed to our strategic orientation. Tactically, the bureaucracy is torn between its base in the class from which all its power flows, and the system which these same leaders serve because they are its ideological prisoners, not its subjective agents. (It is this contradiction which prevents the labor leadership from turning to fascism, despite the subjectively fascist views of not a few of them). As a result, in a crisis, it cannot be precluded that splits may occur in the bureaucracy resulting in very uneven, mixed bags, which may even call on the ranks to organize and fight. John L. Lewis and the CIO are a case in point. If the materialization of such mixed forms are in part a function of the weakness of the left, they also, at the same time, such is their contradiction, open the door to revolutionists.

It can be argued that such developments are no longer likely, that the risks to the bureaucracy are so great, that the absence of any solutions available to them is so absolute, that they will consider it "irrational" to move. But no one can ignore the uneven development which is likely to occur, nor the leeway for the bureaucracy which the absence of a strong left provides. A response by a layer of the bureaucracy hoping to head off and integrate the rank & file revolt cannot therefore be precluded. The bankruptcy and desperation of the bureaucracy can produce paralysis. But it can also, as in all illnesses, produce "irrational" behavior reflexes as well.

Our main weapon against the negative aspects of such a development will not be abstention, but programmatic differentiation to expose the left-bureaucrats, including our fight for union democracy, i. e. rank & file control.

We do not say that such "left wings" will be common, or that they will be viable, much less that their bureaucratic elements can be brought to the revolution. But to ignore the possibilities of this variant of "left wing", if history imposes them upon us, would be a disaster for us.

The initial stage of a mass left wing in the unions may well not follow paths of our choosing. But what will be of our choosing is how we relate to these movements, and learn to move them. The situation in the UAC-AFT today is one example of the complex forms and stages a left wing may pass through on its road to our road.

The M&K document improperly reduces to a footnote the complaint that we appear to be afflicted with conventionitis. If this could be substantiated, the revelation would deserve far more than a footnote. Local intervention must be central to our work, especially today. And it is.

All the more reason to deplore the fact that, despite repeated appeals to the California comrades (an appeal reiterated in the draft theses on the AFT submitted last December) that they draft a section on special tasks in building the union and the I.S. fraction in the very unique conditions of California, no such draft has ever been submitted. (Lacking this, how could they function at the CFT convention?)

Actually in discussing the problem of building a R&F caucus, it is M&K who suffer from "conventionitis". They write as if the AFT convention were the center of our struggle. How does participating in a coalition with liberal bureaucrats (among others) at a national convention prevent us from building a R&F caucus back where we work? On the contrary, it will be easier to build a local caucus if we can say "affiliated with the UAC, the national opposition caucus in the AFT". The CP does this with their Teachers Action Caucus in New York City; and they do not worry whether their local activities would meet with Herrick Roth's approval!

Finally, in the very last sentence of their proposal, M&K ask for the active involvement of all comrades, and that we discuss and give feedback to their proposals. A commendable sentiment, and reasonable request, were it not for the fact that it is accompanied by their request that the NAC adopt their proposals, prior to a discussion in the ranks of the fraction, and over the fraction's head. Such conduct is harmful to the health and future of the fraction, and harmful to the I.S. It should be repudiated by the next national fraction meeting.

David Miller

June 1, 1972

THE SPLIT PERSPECTIVE IN THE AFT

by Wayne Price

I am in general agreement with the response to the Berkeley document, with a minor tactical difference. First, the agreement:

We dislike the UAC's acceptance of Miesen because we have a different conception of the caucus than that held by the UAC leadership. We feel that the caucus cannot win -- at least in any meaningful way -- if it attempts to imitate Shanker's machine politics. We oppose the idea of running a candidate because he can win, regardless of his real attitude to our program, regardless of his past. This is trying to beat Shanker at his own game. The union already has one liberal-minded political machine and will have no use for another. Instead we believe that a caucus can grow if it is founded on the right ideas and program, the program that teachers will slowly come to see is the only answer to our problems.

Our conception of a caucus rooted in the rank & file of the union has several relations to the programmatic conception of the caucus. It is part of the program: to "democratize" the union. It is our way of building an organization, as opposed to a patronage machine. It is dependent on the program, since few will fight to democratize an organization unless there is something which they want to express or do through the democratized structure.

What we would all like to do, of course, is to say that it would be better for the caucus to run no one or to run any Jane Doe rather than this Miesen. Alternatively, if we had the forces we would run a Draft Roth or Graves campaign to force them to run instead. Unfortunately, in the present circumstances, to wage a fight centering on Miesen would totally lose us our chance of presenting our programmatic conception of the caucus in an understandable way. People will surely respond in a "practical" fashion, saying that they might agree on that so-and-so Miesen, but we need a candidate, his presence may help to get other UAC candidates elected, other leaders have refused, and so forth.

Instead, the real alternative is to center our fight on program. To fight over the merger question is to be in direct opposition to Miesen and his record as well as to the other misleaders. It is on a ground favorable to us, where we will appear to have the "practical" position. It is to make an impact on people's minds in a way that they will remember and think about, since the future will show that we were right. The same goes for fighting on the political action question or the question of state-wide or national work stoppages. The danger lies in trying to get too much, do too much for the situation and in effect get less than we can get with a more modest approach.

We must be aware of the smallness of the radical forces around us. Most of those who voted for the Labor Party resolution last time were in the I.S., ISCo, SWP, or the Newark radicals plus some eccentrics (in the context of the AFT) like Paul Rubin. This is hardly a stable base (e.g. the Newark people are now Shanker-ites!) with which to split and form a new (rank & file) caucus. Actually the Bay Area Resolution does not advocate a split. It merely points out that its proposal "...will in all probability (result in) a split... (and that) we may be forced to withdraw with the other militants in the caucus." This would read more aptly if it said "withdraw

The Split Perspective in the AFT, 2

leaving the other militants in the caucus"!

At this point, the key to starting an actual rank & file caucus is to do so where we are part of the rank & file, especially in sunny California. What have we been doing in California??

I disagree with the Response over the matter of voting for Miesen inside the caucus. Our position will be clearer if we quietly abstain. Perhaps they will count us as part of a "unanimous" vote; that's all right. We can explain to people individually -- and in our newspaper -- that we oppose Miesen and are disgusted by him but choose not to wage a fight over him given the situation.

This is obviously a mere tactical difference. Within proletarian organizations we are permitted to support the "lesser evil" candidate. After the rank & file candidate withdrew in his favor, wouldn't we have supported the corrupt bureaucrat Yablonski against Boyle? Wouldn't we now support the Miners for Democracy?

Further: we should vote for Miesen on the convention floor as part of the UAC slate, and as someone running on a program we generally support. This is not hypocritical, since we think that it would be a good thing if Miesen and the whole slate won, even if they sold out (as they all would, in one way or another). Not that we wouldn't have problems dealing with that situation, but nothing is built on failure.

Finally, I do not think we have any of the resources necessary to distribute a publication aimed nationally at rank & file militants. This is a pipe dream right now. More of a possibility would be a periodical aimed at "radical teachers" of one sort or another. We do have national contacts with such people through the radical milieu. Even this, which we have discussed before, is only speculation.

RESOLUTIONS SUBMITTED TO THE NATIONAL AFT FRACTION

Bay Area AFT Fraction -- June 15, 1972

Introduction

The AFT fraction has been slow in pulling together nationally, and this fact reflected itself in the documents that were written recently (the Bay Area one and the Response by Miller). Some points of friction between the Bay Area and New York City fractions, mainly resulting from poor communication, became apparent. More importantly, the political differences, though in some ways obvious, were hard to pinpoint. We should begin at the Convention to implement a modest national structure for the fraction, including a discussion bulletin to head off such developments in the future.

This document -- a joint effort of the Bay Area Fraction -- is an attempt to focus on the questions in dispute and to make it possible to debate them without extraneous points cluttering up the picture. We think it clears up the ambiguity in the earlier document. The numbered paragraphs are resolutions that we would like to be considered for a vote. They cover roughly the areas of an evaluation of the United Action Caucus, our relation to it, and a part of a national perspective and some implementation for it. Not every question is covered, but hopefully all the main points in dispute are included here.

Following the numbered paragraphs are some notes in reply to the Miller document which are not submitted for a vote.

Jan A.	Marilyn M.
Sheila C.	Ed W.
Joel J.	Ken P.
Margaret J.	

Resolutions

1. The UAC was formed at the 1971 Convention, grouping together the New Caucus (radicals), a section of the Black Caucus led by Carole Graves, and a bureaucratic stratum represented by AFT Vice-Presidents Simons and Roth. Simons (President of the Washington, D.C. Local 6) and Roth (President of the Colorado AFL-CIO) had been pushed out of Shanker's Progressive Caucus. The membership and base of support for the UAC came from smaller locals with a militant or anti-Shanker leadership, including some peripheral locals (college, non-CB), and a few larger locals such as Newark and Washington.
2. The Caucus embodied two contradictory impulses, those being: (1) toward being a vehicle of militancy and advancing the class struggle, and (2) toward being a bureaucratic bloc to shuffle the top union leadership. The contradictory nature of the Caucus was reflected in its public face at the Convention. The program adopted was one of struggle, though the political action point advanced by socialists was defeated. The program was used by socialists to get Roth to call for a national work stoppage against the wage freeze.

The bureaucratic stratum, Roth et. al., had no program, and thus allowed "ours" (except labor party). They have no program, but only "issues" with which they hope to appeal to various "constituencies." Sometimes they can use "radical issues," such as Angela Davis (constituency = blacks). The primary face of the UAC, however, was in its candidates, especially Simons, who ran on a "program" of "newness" and opposition to Shanker's heavy handedness. Their lack of any programmatic alternative allowed Shanker, Hill, et. al. to cream them in debate.

3. Leadership within the Caucus fell to Roth, the embodiment of the bureaucratic impulse within the Caucus. This was assured by his being the most prestigious and articulate leader, and the lack of coherence and direction of the forces that could have been a counterweight. The lack of coherence of the better elements within the Caucus was a function of their isolation in many smaller locals, and their low level of commitment to the Caucus (due to local bargaining and relative local union autonomy, the importance of the national union is not directly felt).

4. After the Convention Roth maintained control over the UAC through his chairmanship, domination of the Steering Committee, and control over the occasional informational letters sent out to members. This control and the lack of any coherent counter-tendency insured that Roth would be able to steer the Caucus in a more bureaucratic direction. The UAC made little attempt throughout the year to sink roots in the rank and file of the AFT around its adopted program. Its newsletters demonstrated its concern with convention matters (i.e., constitutional amendments and convention candidates) -- and with virtually nothing else. Its efforts were strictly directed toward gearing up for the '72 Convention, and the election for officers. These efforts culminated in the endorsement of Ken Meisen by the UAC Steering Committee.

5. The endorsement of Meisen signalled the decisive turn the UAC took toward becoming a bureaucratic bloc. Even while allowing a relatively good program to remain (in order to corral the left vote), Meisen opposes parts of it, does not take it seriously, and is running almost solely on the issue of "No Merger." The conservative Meisen forces will now enter the Caucus, and the Caucus will largely be defined by Meisen's candidacy, and his platform of "No Merger." The UAC slate will no doubt include Roth, Simons, et. al. as a "left wing" -- a key part of the bargain.

Of course, the rank and file elements present within the UAC at last year's Convention will still be there. But now the difficulty of them emerging as a force will be magnified by the fact that the identity of the Caucus has shifted; no longer is it built around a program, but now it is built around the Meisen Slate and "No Merger." The left still remains a "constituency," but one that can be dealt with easily, given its disarray and also given the left reputation the UAC can call upon.

6. For our own part, it will be necessary to take the lead in forming a left-wing tendency inside the Caucus -- initially loose -- committed to a program of mass action, merger, the UAC political action plank, and building a

presence among the rank and file. This tendency must insist that the Caucus give serious consideration to its program before it chooses its candidates for union office. Furthermore, the tendency must strenuously oppose the attempt to define the Caucus as anti-merger, both because the position itself is wrong and leaves us exposed to Shanker's attacks, and because the merger question is being used as a substitute for real programmatic alternatives to the national leadership. Since the Caucus will probably approve the rest of our program -- with the possible exception of political action -- we must insist that any Caucus candidates give priority to the need for a program of mass action and reaching the ranks, no matter what position is finally adopted on merger.

7. It will be necessary to begin building this tendency before the Convention -- through individual contacts and the newsletter to be initiated -- for these reasons. (1) Since Meisen is making every effort to swamp the Caucus with anti-merger forces, many pro-merger militants may be reluctant to join unless they knew of this opposition within the Caucus, and (2) given the instability of the UAC, it is important that a left pole be crystallized as soon as possible or else there may be nothing left by the end of the Convention.

8. Our primary fight inside the Caucus will be around the question of program. Because Meisen embodies the "No Merger" program, however, our tendency should be prepared (and say so publically) to put forward a candidate against Meisen (and also indicate our willingness to support an alternative candidate who supports our program). Once the Caucus has adopted its program (assuming we lose), we cannot run against Meisen on a programmatic basis. At this point we should openly declare within the UAC that we will abstain on Meisen's candidacy because of his stand on merger and his unwillingness to project the UAC program. Our abstaining allows us to voice our opposition to Meisen without prematurely cutting ourselves off from the rest of the UAC. In the context of the fight waged on program our objections to Meisen will be understood by most Caucus members.

9. Upon losing, the tendency would then have to face the question of continued participation in the Caucus. This cannot be decided upon in advance. It will depend on the size and confidence of our tendency as well as the composition and character of the UAC. If we remain in the UAC (as appears likely), then we will support the UAC slate, including Meisen. Our expectations are that the UAC will be severely demoralized following a Meisen defeat (which appears likely). It may very well be that continued membership in a defunct or near-defunct convention caucus, which can play no role in reaching the ranks with a program of action would be a political liability. Furthermore, a caucus which is defined by anti-merger will drive away many potentially healthy elements into Shanker's arms, or into frustration and apathy on the national level. Such likelihoods dictate that the left have an organized independent presence -- whether inside or outside the Caucus. It will be out of such a nucleus that something may be salvaged from the UAC.

10. Our national perspective for the AFT for the coming year will be to begin to build a left tendency in the union, a tendency which could attempt to

build broader formations such as the UAC on the state and national levels. On the local level we will attempt to play a major role in the formation of opposition caucuses where feasible, and to be a left pole of attraction in those that do exist. In any broad opposition caucuses on the state and national levels (the UAC or others), we will attempt to build this left tendency to be a real pole of attraction inside the caucus.

11. However, the core of our AFT work must be at the state and especially at the local level. It is at these levels of the union that we will be able to have the most immediate effect as we become well known as serious trade unionists in our locals. But for us to counterpose state and local work to national work or to say that if we do effective work in these areas our problems of future functioning nationally will be solved is foolish. Unfortunately for us, the national AFT leadership does not respect this neat federation conception and is working very hard to intervene in California and surely in other states to further its politics and strategy for the union. In California, it has been very successful in tightening up the leadership and functioning of the staff in order to put forward its program for the union. We must be developing a coordinated national perspective to counter theirs.

12. We do not think that the IS can agitate for an immediate program in its own name in unions or mass work. This, however, makes it all the more important for us to have some vehicle for our viewpoint in the AFT. At times we may put out propoganda in the name of the IS for educational purposes and for the benefit of our contacts.

13. Recruitment to the IS must become a priority in the AFT. Many of us have a number of contacts around us, and every effort should be made to recruit them. Through recruitment we can extensively multiply our ability to carry forth our programs in the AFT.

14. As a primary vehicle for implementing our national strategy we propose to establish a national newspaper/magazine aimed at what should be the UAC constituency. This publication need not be attached to any formal organization, but will be ours and those who generally agree with our viewpoint within the union. (The question of the newspaper and its relationship to the UAC will be determined during the course of the national Convention in August. If we remain in the UAC, the characterization like "UAC members for merger and a labor party" may be appropriate.)

This publication is to provide a political context for our AFT work, which is presently scattered and uncoordinated. It will be a means of spreading our influence and presence far beyond the limitations imposed by our physical presence, since we can distribute in other locals, to the UAC list, etc., and we can build a network of collaborators and sympathizers. Through contacts and collaborators we should be able to have a presence in some of the key locals that we are now totally isolated from. It is also an effective way of making contacts and involving them in our work directly and furthering recruitment.

The political program of the publication need not be elaborated here. It should be our general program for labor (see Brian Mackenzie labor document) and our general program for the AFT in particular (see David Miller document on the AFT). This needs no more elaboration since there is substantial agreement on the subject. We may wish to make some immediately-operative portions of this program explicit at first (e.g., "where we stand"), or we may wish to leave it implicit. Of course, any local caucuses or groupings we may be able to crystallize may be formed on a somewhat lower programmatic level.

The content of the publication will include: (1) articles on general issues before the AFT such as the "Million Dollar (COPE) Fund," political action, merger in New York state and elsewhere, community control, etc.; (2) news-and-analysis articles on current topics such as the Portland situation, Newark, various strikes, New Directions Caucus in Oakland, etc; (3) articles on issues before the labor movement such as wage controls, right to strike, etc.; (4) articles dealing with educational issues such as democracy in the schools, student issues, teaching techniques, curriculum, etc. We should have a strong emphasis on racism and the concerns of black teachers, and attempt to use this vehicle to reach black teachers (probably one of our more likely areas for black recruitment is among teachers).

The argument given against a national newsletter or other forms of ongoing national functioning is that our areas are so dissimilar, particularly since there is no collective bargaining in California, that articles pertinent here would not be of interest or useful to people in other areas. The description of the New York situation, given to us by none other than Shanker at the last CFT Convention, makes us question this assertion. According to Shanker, the new legislation affecting education and teachers in New York is very similar to and equally as disastrous as that in California. (Collective bargaining is not the ultimate protection for teachers.) Clearly, articles which spoke to the need for IPA would be relevant to teachers functioning throughout the country. Questions of merger come up for all of us and must be dealt with, as is true with other issues such as racism, sexism, funding, etc. A national newsletter would not be an alternative to our local work, but an important addition to it.

Some Details and Specifics

1. Resources. The IS has a small but politically experienced and competent cadre within the AFT who have the ability and numbers to produce a quality publication. Moreover, we have a periphery and influence beyond our numbers and should be able to involve others in writing and distributing from the beginning, including contacts in significant locals in which we have no direct presence. Specific editorial and production work could be handled in either the Bay Area or in the New York City area. An attempt should be made to get collaborators involved in this work from the beginning.
2. Format. Suggested frequency is monthly or every six weeks. Suggested format is that of the old Independent Socialist in its pre-tabloid days. To

be sold for some small price, and with subscriptions can probably be self-supporting or close to it.

3. Target Date. Should be in time for the first issue to be at the national convention with a good selection of material aimed at the Convention. Of course, it should be clear in issue number one that it isn't just a Convention organ, but a continuing publication.

It's our estimation that a perspective such as this will be very successful in multiplying our weight in the union and developing a large number of contacts nationally. This is especially true given the present vacuum on the left in the union and given the attitude of the CP in particular. Lastly, our national influence will grow only if it is built on a day by day basis which such a publication could do, not just by activity on the national level at convention time.

Notes on the Miller Document

Miller's document deals at some length with the general question of the development of rank and file oppositions and left developments within the unions (pp. 4-5, 7-9). Most of the material is unobjectionable, some of it ABC. Indeed, we all agree that local leaders cannot be indiscriminantly called "bureaucrats," and in fact some local AFT Exec Boards approximate militant caucuses. And, of course, we will expect any significant opposition that develops to have a large number of local officers. A development like TURF in the IBT, which enrolled thousands of members, contains hundreds of activists, and yet only has a handful of local officers, would be unimaginable in the AFT where in many locals it is relatively easy for militants to get into the leadership and there is relative local autonomy. Of course, in the big-city locals, which are the most significant, the situation is much tighter and more like the more bureaucratized unions. A lot of space is devoted to banging down open doors: no one is proposing that we "offer ultimatata about the need for rank and file caucuses" in every local before we will work with local leaders, as is implied on page 5.

The issue is the orientation of the UAC: Is it trying to win the rank and file to its program, or negotiate for seats on the National Executive Board? Is it trying to organize the ranks or not? Miller doesn't deal with the UAC very explicitly -- he implies it is some sort of mixed bag, but how "mixed," what direction is it going, and was the Meisen entry a nodal point? A difference in orientation does come through in his various attacks on the Spartacists that have infiltrated our ranks. For example, on page 3, he righteously defends the UAC for issuing two newsletters, saying K. and M. have ignored this fact. In fact, the only weakness he can find with the UAC "publication" is that we did not succeed in getting our political action proposal in! But our discussion of a publication referred to a publication that would be a tool to reach rank and file teachers and win them to a program of struggle. Miller and the UAC have something else in mind: sort of akin to the "Legislative Reports" of some Internationals that are sent out to the tops, and deal mainly with bureaucratic questions.

Miller's long document doesn't unambiguously state his evaluation of the UAC. Five months ago in Workers' Power Miller wrote -- to our surprise -- "All socialists, and all opponents of the bureaucracies which run most unions should welcome the development of the UAC in the AFT and should work for the creation of similar caucuses within other unions." (Emphasis added) The entire article was one of enthusiastic support for the UAC (Workers' Power #47). Is that still his position? Or did the Meisen candidacy change his evaluation?

Miller insists that we should support Meisen even within the UAC. He fails to understand the significance of the Meisen endorsement, and disconnects the program from the candidacy in a way that no one else at the Convention will. Our difference on how to deal with the Meisen candidacy follows from this.

Miller doesn't really deal with what is our main thrust: the need to build a left tendency in the AFT (and UAC). We think we have been sadly remiss in this regard. Briefly, we played a role in putting Roth at the head of the caucus, and later made no attempt to challenge his hegemony over it. After the '71 Convention, we discussed and decided upon building a left tendency within the UAC around a publication, but did not follow through.

We thus find ourselves a victim of our own mistakes, and must learn from the past and not repeat them.

Given our resources, we could not have decisively altered the direction of the UAC, but we could have begun to pull the better elements around us, and would now have some beginning to build from. The significance we give to this orientation is reflected in our resolutions.

Corrections of Errors in the Miller Document and Explanation of Errors in the M. and K. One

Political Action Leaflet. M. and K. included the preliminary position paper on political action for the UAC newsletter written by Miller because they did not know that another one was written which incorporated our suggestions. They never got the final one.

Open Ballot Referendum. We have now found the minutes of that fraction meeting held on 8/21/71 in the Bay Area which made the decision about the open ballot/secret ballot question. Quote from the minutes: "Passed unanimously -- attempt to get the UAC to put out a referendum on the open ballot and proportional representation. Steve to contact the Steering Committee of the UAC and see if feasible and report to the Steering Committee of the National Fraction (Joel J., Marilyn M., Steve Z.)."

On Shanker's Secret Ballot Referendum. David Miller implies that we actually supported Shanker's side on this question. This is not true. We all voted on the UAC side, but still raised the need for proportional representation to really solve the problem of tight control of the locals by the leadership.

NATIONAL AFT FRACTION MINUTES - DETROIT, JUNE 30, JULY 2, 1972

AGENDA

1. Perspective for the national convention
2. Publication

1. There was a two hour discussion based upon the following documents: Miller response to the East Bay motion and perspective, and Resolutions by the Bay Area Fraction. Issues discussed included functioning in the United Action Caucus (UAC), past, present, future; future perspective toward the UAC; how to deal with the Miesen candidacy. The following motions were passed:

1. That the Steering Committee of the fraction organize a meeting to form a left tendency inside the UAC based upon a pro-merger stance and mass action for the union. 7-6-1.
2. That the fraction not support Ken Miesen as the candidate of the UAC and urge the same for the tendency inside the caucus. 8-5-1.
3. That the fraction support Miesen on the floor of the convention and indicate to the UAC that we intend to do so. 8-5-1.
4. That the fraction wage a fight to have the program discussed before candidates at the first UAC meeting. 14-0-0.
5. That the fraction urge the left tendency to put out a statement explaining its opposition to Miesen and not to do so unless approved by the tendency. 10-3-1.
6. That the fraction make a verbal statement to the UAC explaining its opposition to Miesen.
7. That the fraction urge the tendency to make such a statement to the UAC. 9-0-5.

2. There was a one and one-half hour discussion on the publication proposed. The discussion revolved around resolution 14, included in the Bay Area Fraction resolutions. The following motions were passed:

1. To delete the paragraph in resolution 14 beginning: "The argument given..." 12-0-0.
2. To delete in the first paragraph the words: "and a labor party". 10-0-4.
3. To delete the entire sentence: "Program should be our general..." and substitute the program of the tendency formed inside the UAC. 11-0-2.
4. To try to get the tendency to put out the publication under its own name. 15-0-0.
5. As a precondition to putting out the publication before the convention, we attempt to get as many non-ISers and independents to participate with us as possible in putting it out. 8-3-2. (Note: There was considerable debate on whether the publication should be put out before the convention, given that we wanted it to be the publication of the tendency after the convention.)
6. That the Steering Committee of the fraction determine if the precondition has been met for putting out the publication. 12-0-3.

FRACTION MINUTES, July 2, 1972

AGENDA

1. Reports

2. Implementation of the publication motions
3. Merger
4. Priorities on relocation of fraction members
5. Fraction functioning
6. Steering Committee election

1. The following reports were made: Marilyn M. on Friday's fraction meeting; Joel J. on California; Roy on Detroit; Steve on the NYC region; Dave and Stan on the University; Linda B. on the AFT Women's Conference.

2. Publication implementation: Marilyn M. report from the Steering Committee: SC recommends: The publication be put out in the Bay Area. Articles suggested were the following: Merger, Miesen, Shanker in NYC, mass action and public employees (Quebec), Meany's program for the AFT, small article on refusal of two AFT locals to support NEA-led strikes in the midwest. Deadline is to be August 7. The Steering Committee will determine by August 1 if we should put out the publication before the convention. In the discussion which followed, Stan suggested the name Teachers' Dialogue for the publication. Names suggested by the Steering Committee included Teacher Action, Teachers' Voice, Militant Teacher, Unity in Action. It was decided to refer these suggestions to the new Steering Committee for decision. Stan W. also suggested that the paper be open.

3. Steve Z. gave a 10 minute presentation on merger, followed by discussion. The following motions were passed. The Steering Committee set up a discussion on merger, and how IS'ers should function in relation to it. That the Steering Committee discuss the possibility of school-wide rather than city-wide locals for the AFT.

4. Priorities for relocation. Motion: The Steering Committee solicit reports on local conditions with relation to relocation of members. The Steering Committee then discuss these and set priorities. PASSES.

5. Fraction functioning. The following motions were made and tabled to the Steering Committee for action:

1. That the national fraction put out a bulletin at least bi-monthly, including reports on the major regions. PASSES.
2. That everyone should write a local report within the next month. PASSES.
3. That all mailings be by first class mail, that Marxist jargon be omitted, that no specific schools be mentioned, that only one copy go to the National Secretary.
4. That the Steering Committee collect documents by October 1 for a pamphlet.

6. Steering Committee election. The following nominations were made: Joel J., Linda B., Steve Z., Dave E., Bonnie S. New Steering Committee elected: Joel J., Steve Z., Bonnie S., Alternate, Dave E.

MEETING ADJOURNED

Marilyn M.