

EMERGENCY

FINANCIAL

APPEAL

By now everyone will be aware that there is a fund drive going on in the organisation to raise \$5000. BUT MEMBERS SHOULD BE AWARE OF SOMETHING ELSE, THAT FIGURE DOESN'T EVEN COME NEAR TO THE AMOUNT WE HAVE TO RAISE IN THE NEXT SIX WEEKS TO ENSURE THE CONTINUITY OF OUR WORK. Comrades should be clear about this situation, it is not the result of bad planning. It is the result of our growth over the last period, it is the result of the increase in the class struggle and more particularly it is a result of the fact that we are determined to expand our activity to seize the opportunities which are now present for even greater growth and a larger influence in the developing struggle.

The intervention on the April 26th demo cost us \$1000 and given its impact would have been cheap at five times the price. The steady improvement in Workers Power and the planning for going weekly is expensive too. As we begin to be a real national organisation our expenses for travel by our EC members and worker leaders are increasing manyfold. We are now beginning to develop real national fractions, we have a youth organisation (which incidentally can't publish the next Red Tide without more cash) that is now expanding from the West Coast, the flow of agitational and educational publications is also increasing and the development of the organisation demands that we have more training schools, public forums and regional events. This is only a small part of the list of things we are now doing. What they have in common is that they are all symptoms of a growing, healthy organisation and they all cost a great deal of money.

WE ARE THEREFOR ASKING THAT WHEREVER IT IS HUMANLY POSSIBLE OUR MEMBERS SHOULD IMMEDIATELY DONATE HALF OF ANY TAX REBATE THEY GET FROM THE GOVERNMENT. To be of any real good to us this must be on top of the present fund drive and it must be sent to us as soon as possible. The N.O. staff have already committed the whole of their rebates to the organisation and we are asking the maximum number of members to at least partially follow their example. We are budgetting the new financial year in such a way as to avoid any re-occurrence of this severe crisis, but the new year is several months away and I.S. is desperate for financial assistance now. Without it we will be forced into a serious cut-back and the political cost of that will be enormous. We are aware that many of our members face serious financial hardship because of the recession but we still need a response from those with the ability to pay which will raise thousands for I.S.

I.S. NATIONAL REPORT

NATIONAL SECRETARY.

Vol. III, #17

April 16-31, 1975

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FOR MEMBERS ONLY

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NATIONAL SECRETARY'S REPORT.

The crucial development for I.S. since the last national report was published (that is not adequately covered in the EC minutes that are part of this report) was our intervention in the April 26th Washington demonstration. There is considerable coverage of this event in Workers Power as well as a full evaluation from the EC further on in this document. It would be futile to repeat any of it here, but comrades should be aware that there are also some other articles on it in the forthcoming issue of the Discussion Bulletin.

Which brings me neatly to the second point. It has become clear since I started doing this job that there is great confusion in all levels of the group about what the National Report is supposed to be, so I should take this opportunity to clarify the position. It is not a forum for the views of individual members, however important or correct those views might be. It is the discussion bulletin which fulfills that role. The National Report is designed to carry the official documents of the EC, NC, branches, fractions, etc for the information of the whole organisation. Please bear that in mind when you send in stencils to the National Office and remember that unless the stencils are suitable for a Gestetner machine they will not be published.

We are now engaged in a re-organisation of the National Office which includes the scheduling of EC meetings every Thursday morning and the meeting of the Industrial Committee in the afternoons. The industrial committee is composed of those national organisers whose responsibilities include travelling to the branches and helping our industrial organisation. The committee is designed to ensure the total integration of all aspects of our industrial work into the general strategy and activity of the organisation. The aim over time and given increased resources is to bring all elements of our national organisation such as education, publications, book service, finance, WP distribution etc into one office and have a wellorganised industrial dept as well. Finally it should be reported that since the last NC we have recruited forty new members and that the major convention documents are now published and will be sent out this week.

EC Minutes April 23, 1975

Present-ALL except DF and GW(excused).

Report by JW on April 26 March and our intervention. Discussion of what we want out of it politically. Importance of bringing different r & f groups together, thus crucial importance of keeping contingent together.

Network. First assessment of Network-after 2 issues. Presentation by JW. Most useful for educating contacts of our perspectives for the UAW, and especially ~~XX~~ helpful for new UAW members in areas where we have no local fractions. Problems in terms of feedback on Network throughout the organization--little response by branches, etc. KM reported usefulness with contacts in other industries in terms of perspectives, analysis of the economy, etc. Also problems in terms of getting workers to read it in terms of length and heaviness. MOTION:(JW) We maintain our recurrent persp. on Network long enough to really test it out. PASSES. To be a full discussion of auto persp. at May 7 EC mtg.

Future Economic Developments. Presentation by JG on outline for what will happen in the economy in the next 3 years. MOTION (JT) To be written as an inexpensive pamphlet also to be used as part of the convention document on the Turn to Agitation. PASSES. MOTION(JG) Be internal convention document and then turned into a pamphlet. FAILS. MOTION(JT) To have draft in 3 weeks. PASSES.

Recruitment Campaign. Presentation by GW. Agreed to by EC that worker recruitment campaign to begin in fall. Details to be presented at next EC mtg.

Red Tide. Report by MP on her trip to the west coast RT branches. MOTION(GW) That the EC tell RT-EC that someone should come to Detroit immediately and put on maximum pressure to be done in days rather than weeks. MOTION (JW) Means of subsidy, etc. to be negotiated with all RT leadership. We urge some RTers to get part-time jobs, but we are prepared to support the whole crew moving for up to 6 months. PASSES

NAT. Sec Report. Organization of N.O. MOTION-JG to begin drawing up next years budget proposal to be due by May 21. PASSES.

Report on change of personnel in Detroit. New MAL in Madison.

EC MINUTES--May 1, 1975

ITEM:

IMPLEMENTATION:

- 1) Minutes--Merry will be present at EC mtgs. to take minutes--with no speaking rights and accepting EC confidentiality & discipline.
- 2) EC Meeting time--The EC will meet regularly from 9am-2pm every Thursday.
- 3) May 17 Demos--Our line on NAACP bussing demo was presenting a problem for LA and BA RT comrades who wished to participate in building the local demos for May 17. JG presented proposal to overthrow our line on May 17 on the basis of the real content of the simultaneous W. Coast demos, to say we support them. The RT will be taking part in and supporting these demos and the changed line will be reflected in WP. PASSED-ALL FOR.
- 4) Postal Workers Campaign--Request from St. Louis for discussion. Presentation and proposal by KM, that the IS embark on limited intervention around postal contract and strike. The following step will be taken to initiate our intervention:
- 1) A committee be set up, composed of: KM, CW, and paul (Phil.) to shape the campaign
 - 2) A pamphlet on p.o. & postal unions will be produced.
 - 3) A plan for consistent WP coverage shall be developed by the ctte.
 - 4) That the branches will prepare to do support and contact work in June of July.
 - 5) PR to do forums in the Midwest on P.O. situation. PASSED.
- 5) Defense Against RU-- Request for discussion by BA comrades who have been hassled by RU while selling WP. Proposal by GW on dealing with threats by RU & defense against RU if situation arises. PASSES with minor amendments. Agreed not to circulate doc. but to instruct members to contact N.O. for guidance in event of RU threats in their areas.
Comrades should not sell WP at RU-only events. If cds. wish to do this for specific events, it must be ok'd thru Nat. Sec. Office.
- 6) Membership Campaign-- EC already agreed to worker membership campaign. Specific 13 point proposal by GW presented & tabled for amendment at next EC mtg. To be presented at NC.

JG to explaining change to RT cds.
GS to implement line in WP.

KM to call early mtg. of PO ctte.

GW to send guidance to BA on basis of agreed position contained in EC "Defense Against RU" doc.

KM to prepare amendments for next EC mtg.

May 1 EC minutes--p. 2

ITEM:

IMPLEMENTATION:

7) Branch Reports-- Developments in the following branches were discussed: NY, Pitts., and New Paltz.

GW to go to NY in June

8) Washington D.C.-- Presentation by KM. At April 26 demo we made contact with radical independent group in Retail Clerks (with a r&f membership of 75). They were very impressed with the r&f coalition. KM proposed these follow-up steps be taken:

KM to ensure implementation of #'s 1,3,&4. GW or JW: #3

- 1) Ann to maintain regular contact.
 - 2) Someone with trade union experience (maybe JW and some cds from NY) to go to Washington.
 - 3) Kadi to correspond with them.
 - 4) Invite them to join the r&f Coalition.
- PASSED-ALL FOR.

9) United Black Workers-- JW has talked extensively with UBW cds and proposed the following:

JW to report back on progress.

- 1) That we should have a perspective of establishing fraternal relations with UBW over next 2 or 3 months.
 - 2) We send literature & documents regularly and begin correspondence.
 - 3) JW to go back to E.Coast at end of May
 - 4) We begin intensive political discussion and a working relationship in terms of trade union work.
- PASSED- ALL FOR.

10) Moving Comrades to Indianapolis and Flint--

We now have 2 MAL's in Indy and a comrade in Flint. Discussion of Flint TABLED till next EC mtg.

Indy: Bob M. be sent to Indy within a month. ALL FOR
That he try to spend time in Chicago to help build UNC there. ALL FOR

GW to discuss implementation with Bob M.

EC members report on results of discussion with NC members on proposed personnel changes in N.O.

13) African Liberation Day-- Louisville branch planning /MD to call branches and check that major activity. Cleveland branch proposal ~~of~~ was very good but now too late for implementation. Detroit planning forum. some initiative is being taken.

14) Baraka letter-- Reply to Baraka call for electoral coalition in '76, JW will have draft for next EC mtg. It will be submitted to Guardian and go in the bulletin for info of members and use with contacts.

R & F COALITION:

15) Presentation by KM on what our next steps should be to follow-up. One hr. discussion. KM's proposals:
1) That we have a fall r&f IS sponsored conference on strategy for coming contracts. 2) Establish a r&f coalition Continuations Ctte. Some of the tasks of ctte could be to put out statements on events in labor movement & ~~to~~ engage in defense work. Proposed ctte: will be present s.c. slightly expanded to include the

To be implemented thru Indus. Ctte.

May 1 EC minutes-P. 3

ITEM:

IMPLEMENTATION:

R&F Coalition con't.

leaders of other key r & f groups.

We should seek the affiliation of other genuine r & f groups that aren't sect fronts, for the coalition.

Vote on KM's general proposal: PASSED ALL FOR.

16) Washington D.C. DEMO-- Presentation by JW on our performance on April 26. One full hr. disc.

GW to write up evaluation for National Report.(Attached).

NC AGENDA:

SATURDAY, MAY 10;

10:00-12 noon EC Proposal on new Nat. Sec
Nat. Sec. Report
Proposal on Convention Agenda

1:30-4:30 Building the Working Women's Movement
Presentation by BW

6-9p.m. For a Workers Combat Organization
Presentation by GW

SUNDAY, MAY 11:

10:00-1 p.m. IS and Democratic Centralism
Presentation by JG

2:30-5:30 The Worker Membership Campaign
Presentation by KM

7 p.m. Women's Caucus Mtg.

MONDAY, MAY 12:

10:00-12noon Committee Meetings

1-3 p.m. Committee reports
Voting on all motions

April 26th.....A Milestone for I.S.

G.W. FOR E.C.

It is no accident that the present edition of Workers Power carries almost four pages of coverage on the April 26th demonstration and the activities of the Rank and File E Coalition. Such extensive coverage is merely a reflection of the importance of the event ~~in the labour movement~~ in the labour movement. For the first time in decades there was a massive demonstration by organised labour and within that demonstration there was a well-organised contingent representing the rank and file which had a very real impact on the days proceedings. It is true that it was I.S. which took the initiative to build the R&F contingent, but that alone would not justify the prominence we give to its activities in our newspaper, that emphasis is justified only by the fact that the R&F Coalition received ^{active} support from hundreds of workers who hadn't even heard of us before they ~~arrived~~ arrived in Washington and passive support from thousands of other active trade unionists.

April 26th represented our entry as an organisation into the labour movement. In the march from the Capitol there were only two contingents with a real presence. One was organised and subsidized by the bureaucrats of District 37 AFSCME, the other one was ~~our~~ our contingent which although of slightly less size (around 500) had an even greater impact because of the chanting, the sound system, the hundreds of picket signs and the banners of more than a dozen rank and file workers groups in half a dozen industries. Against the wishes of the union goons the contingent forced its way into the stadium and ensured that from that moment on the IUD had an open admission policy for the thousands of people who would have otherwise been left outside. When the field demonstration started it was only the R&F coalition that was actually able to take to the field, mount an organised and coherent protest and leave as a body. The rally afterwards was a fantastic demonstration of the strength and confidence of the rank and file when united across ~~the~~ geographical and industrial boundaries. It was attended by over three hundred workers, many of whom have never been in contact with us before but who none the less signed up to be on the R&F Coalition mailing list. Our record on the day was extremely impressive, not just to us but to the various sectarians who were also ~~there~~ there and the union bureaucrats as well. The SWP made a big play of the ~~rank~~ militancy of the march, copiously quoted the chants of the most vocal contingent but omitted to mention the R&F Coalition who were doing the shouting. The Guardian on the other hand felt that the field demonstration was the most impressive aspect of the day and studiously failed to notice that the R&F Coalition was the most impressive aspect of the field demonstration. It is a rule of the sects that when you are invisible you don't mention the one revolutionary organisation that isn't. The bureaucrats realising the significance of the Coalition ~~discussed~~ discussed on the platform whether they should red-bait us ~~in an attempt to stop the demonstration~~ in an attempt to stop the demonstration. They decided against it because it was clear that we were getting support and had to content themselves with vague statements issued later about "neo-trotskyists taking advantage of the legitimate anger of workers".

It is all this that convinces us that we are not over-estimating the political significance of the 26th when we say it was our debut in the labour movement. It is true that we have only taken one small step on what will be a very long and hard road but it would be a mistake for us not to realise that this step has been taken after years of trying. It should also be said that we record the reactions of the sectarians and bureaucrats not as an exercise in futile gloating but to prove in practice something we believed in theory. That our industrial strategy ~~is~~ is the only one that can take the working class forward and lay the basis for a genuine revolutionary workers party in this country.

The reaction of particularly our worker contacts to the intervention of the coalition allied to the fact that for the first time in a long, long time we were able to attract a proportion of unaffiliated workers to our activities demonstrates that our projections about the developing consciousness of key militant sections of the class and our consequent turn to building I.S. as a worker combat organisation are also well founded in reality. Indeed the level of discipline and aggression shown by non IS workers

in storming the gates and taking to the field carried ~~another~~ ^{another} lesson for us. That there will be times when we are in danger of being left behind as well as times when our actions as revolutionaries create the danger of isolation from the rest of the class.

The plans that were announced at the end of our R&F rally for the establishment of a continuation committee, plans that have been developed since then to include an expanded committee (including a Washington DC R&F group whose existence was unknown to us before they joined our contingent), a press release to labour and R&F papers on the 26th, a co-ordinating role between the groups and individuals who signed the mailing list, etc. These plans represent a significant step forward for us. It is not a R&F movement, or even the embryo of one at this stage, but it will materially improve the possibility of even more successful general interventions in the future and in that sense lay the foundations for the fighting class-wide movement which is an integral and indispensable part of our strategy for revolution.

It would be easy to end this evaluation at this point. After all everyone loves to hear how terrific they are and how fast they are moving forward. But that approach would miss an important if minor part of ~~the~~ what went on on the 26th. It would ignore the mistakes we made and carry with it the possibility that we could repeat these mistakes the ~~next time~~ next time. The truth is that we started on a relatively bad footing because the EC decision to take this initiative came later than it need have done and thus limited the time available for effective preparation. This delay was compounded by a general, though by no means universal, reaction on the part of our members of nervousness towards the idea. Many of our comrades felt it was a good idea but had real doubts as to whether it was possible. In several instances in fact, it was only the enthusiasm of our contacts for the idea of the coalition and contingent which got our members out of bottom gear. In organisational terms there was often a lack of clarity and sloppiness from both the central organisation and the branches. But it should be noted that this was largely the inevitable result of our inexperience and in almost every case the organisation proved healthy enough to correct the mistakes before they became really dangerous. There were many needless hassles for instance about the decision that all our members would concentrate solely and totally on building the contingent to the absolute exclusion of all other forms of political activity that is possible at such a demo. While there is no doubt that the decision was proved correct in practice and that we have to get used to seriously concentrating our resources on achieving one political goal, it is also the case that had the EC done more in the way of political preparation amongst the industrialised members and found speedy and efficient ways for their views to be incorporated in the initiative much of this could have been avoided. It is also true that despite the shortage of time and the impossibility of the Steering Committee playing the dominant leadership role at that stage, that more ~~should have been done~~ should have been done to involve the R&F leaders in the private decisions and public presence of the coalition. Our plans for the continuation committee were formulated in the light of this experience.

at the top

On the actual day of the demo our organisation was too loose and amorphous ~~our~~ chain of command too weak. We had some luck which meant that we lost absolutely nothing by making this error, but we will not always be able to rely on luck. It should also be said that although our planning was in general fairly meticulous it stopped short and didn't include any very concrete contingency plans for going forward once our own rally was over. We could probably have made even more of our remarkable success if we had been better prepared in this realm, though again we do not believe that the failing was crucial. It is our assessment that these mistakes were ~~not~~ definitely secondary ~~and~~ ^{and} that there is no real barrier to them being rectified in the future. We learned some lessons and payed a remarkably low price for the tuition. The major lesson that the 26th taught us was something we already knew and which virtually every section of the organisation is now bent on rectifying. We do not have enough worker members with solid experience of the class struggle and more important than that we do not have enough black worker members in I.S. This will be changing fast and the experience of proving for the first time that we are both part of the labour movement and capable of action independent of the bureaucrats will speed immeasurably this change.

A RESPONSE TO THE EC STATEMENT TO THE BAY AREA EXEC -- From the Bay Area Exec

April 20, 1975

There are two separate, although related, issues in your response to our letter on the resignations of the SC. First there are the specifics surrounding the fusion. But the EC's letter taken as a whole and in individual sections criticizing the BA exec seems more concerned with the second issue -- certain conceptions of leadership.

It may help clarify matters if we repeat that our original letter did not originate out of an exec meeting. The exec had organized and presented the EC's point of view in accordance with your instructions. In the ensuing discussion several questions and comments were made and the membership meeting voted these be summarized and forwarded to you.

This was done by the exec because we felt it was proper to do so. Most members of the branch believed that the SC events were of major importance and that they should be fully and frankly evaluated. Although some members had criticisms, we were not trying to hide a critical position behind "questioning" but rather did not have sufficient knowledge to have a worked out exec position for purposes of internal discussion and evaluation. We differentiate between an internal discussion and an external position. As a result of the tour, articles in WP, and communications with the NC we had sufficient knowledge and were able to defend the organization externally.

The responses of the EC to many of the questions raised were satisfactory and were convincing. Thus, on the basis of your response we are convinced that various circumstances made joint trade union work impossible in this case. We also believe that this experience demonstrates how critical such joint work must be to achieve success in future fusions. Similarly, your response to the question on the relationship of the SC to Black work seems adequate. We agree especially with the point that given the short time, we did not really have a chance to work this question out.

Most members agree with your response to the question about placing SCers on the NC. However, your remark "I find it interesting that...noone in the BA voted against..." when the membership referendum was held, implies that it is inappropriate to raise the question now. At the time of the referendum exec members urged comrades to vote for the inclusions of the SC comrades on the NC. But this recommendation was not on the basis of knowledge of the new SC comrades whom most of our members knew little about. Rather, we believed that the vote was a formal procedure required to support a program that the IS leadership was carrying out. In this context to have voted against this motion would have been a vote of "no confidence" in the IS leadership. Under the circumstances most comrades felt the urgency and importance of the situation and supported the political course of the EC in trying to recruit and integrate the new comrades into the IS in the way determined by the EC. Hence, many comrades responsibly voted yes or abstained despite whatever question or criticisms they had at the time.

But now, it is a different situation. We are trying to internally evaluate a past action of the organization and it is entirely proper to raise this question in this context. We believe that the distinction is crucial and underlies much of our difference with the conception of internal functioning contained in the EC letter. When it was a question of an internal formality to carry through an external program under the direction of the EC, comrades acted in a disciplined way. Now, however, is the time for an internal evaluation and it is certainly appropriate to raise questions and discussion of the EC program.

The working of our question about the "claim of the historical nature of the fusion" made the question difficult to answer. But there was a real question. Did we accurately describe what the fusion really meant even if it had been successful? Or were the claims exaggerated? We believe that they were exaggerated especially since claims of "historical importance" should be partially determined by our expectation of success. Yes, we may have to go through the same thing again -- and maybe several times before we develop successful fusions. And yes, we have to take risks because without taking risks we take no chances for succeeding. But if each time we take a risk we make claims of historical importance then no one will pay attention to our claims when it really is true.

In your answer to this question you refer to the lack of confidence in the organization. But part of this lack of confidence has been engendered by past carelessness and exaggerated claims by the leadership (although certainly this is not the only cause). It might be well to look at the way the fusion was presented to the members (at least in this branch). "This fusion," we were told, "is a major event in the American left today. Even though there appear to be areas of disagreement between the two groups -- we the leadership have pursued the matter intensively, and you can trust us that we have resolved some differences and other will be resolved in practice. At this point to raise areas where you (members) think differences exist is: 1) not to trust our word on the matter; 2) placing unnecessary difficulties in the way of achieving this "historical fusion", 3) carping, petty 4) even racist."

It would have been better for the leadership to state to the membership frankly the problems and the risks that were involved. Alternately, if this were not possible because of the nature of the fusion discussions and if the branch meetings with Joel and Joe were seen as part of the process then we should have been told how we were to act and how questions were to be raised. We believe the branch membership would have carried this out in a disciplined way.

In your letter we were asked for our position on the SC events. On the basis of your response we would sum up our position as follows.

- 1) That it was correct to recruit the SC the way they were recruited and would support doing it again in similar situations although we would place first priority in trying to establish joint trade union and mass work where this did not already exist.
- 2) That there were important differences and therefore some risks which had to be taken and fear of risk should not lead us into a conservative stance.
- 3) That the EC was wrong when it discouraged or even attacked questioning; that it should have acknowledged the difficulties then (that it now says it knew about all along) and explained why we should have taken the risks anyway.
- 4) That in following the EC's leadership on questions like this we also demand a greater accountability -- i.e., a willingness to frankly evaluate past programs.

Finally, you raised questions to us about exec leadership: we disagree that your assumptions apply.

You are quite right that the exec should have included something about its own point of view on the questions raised in the branch. Most exec members generally supported the EC's position within the branch and it would perhaps have clarified matters if you had understood the genesis of the questions.

We think the exec "has a leadership role to play on such an important question." We feel we played that role, though the letter does not deal with that issue and it should have. We also feel that the exec has a responsibility as a transmission belt not only from the national leadership to the membership but just as importantly from the membership to the national leadership.

But we most fundamentally disagree that with your view that an exec should not raise questions "in a combat situation." The logic of the final paragraphs escapes us. The issue was not "how to defend the organization." That we did whenever the appropriate occasion arose (though we don't quite call sectarian baiting from other left groups a combat situation). But this was primarily an internal evaluation to clarify and explain and learn from the politics of the fusion and its failure. It seems to us that the best defense is a politically armed cadre and those questions, no matter how ineptly put, were part of an attempt to so arm ourselves.

But even in a combat situation, questioning is appropriate when it does not distract from the combat. We certainly must vigorously and aggressively defend our politics and organization from its detractors and opponents. But we don't believe that our participation in internal discussion or raising questions internally detracts from that effort. On the contrary we believe that such internal questions and discussion at the proper time helps build real membership confidence in the organization and its leadership. It creates a willingness to go out and fight for a political line because that line is understood. This confidence is further built by the knowledge that after the struggle there will be a frank evaluation of the events and questions will be seriously dealt with.

ATTICA FORUM EVALUATION

-- Passed by Bay Area Exec

1. The Forum itself.

On Friday evening, April 4, the Bay Area branch held a forum on Attica called "Attica: A View from the Inside." It was sponsored by Attica Now (a split off from the Attica Legal Defense Committee) and the I.S./Red Tide. The program included speeches by Popeye Jackson of the United Prisoners Union, Jack Trautman of the I.S., and Dalou Asahi of Attica NOW. A short question/discussion period followed the presentations, which was then followed by the fund pitch given by Popeye Jackson. The film "Attica" which is about 80 minutes long was then shown.

The forum was attended by about 165 people on a very rainy evening. It was held at Laney College Forum Auditorium which is near downtown Oakland. Laney College is a community college with a majority of black students. The audience was predominantly white, although there were some 20 blacks and several Puerto Ricans as well. (These latter were contacted by Mike P through our work in the Puerto Rican Solidarity Day Committee). We collected about \$580, of which about \$450 went to the Attica Brothers and \$130 for expenses.

Several groups set up tables upon invitation, including the farmworkers, the United Prisoners Union, Bay Area Gay Liberation, the Red Tide and the I.S. The latest issue of Workers Power was laid out on each seat with a subscription form attached.

2. Forum Preparations.

The forum was generally well prepared, given our limitations discussed below. The branch began to organize seriously for the forum about two weeks in advance. The Exec appointed a four person steering committee composed of Sheila, Joel, Margaret and Michael P. Joel and Sheila were primarily responsible.

We had approximately 7,000 leaflets and posters printed (expense \$108) which were very attractive. Members and contacts were organized to post them in all parts of Oakland and Berkeley and to leaflet at Laney College, U.C., Coop grocery stores, and three Oakland high schools, and all movement events.

Members and some contacts were also issued books of tickets for the forum a week and a half in advance. Members were expected to sell at least 10 tickets to friends, at Coops, at campuses, in the workplace.

We also held a press conference (at Glide Church in S.F.) on April 2 to which 4 radio stations came, including one major black A.M. station. Also, the Daily Cal ran an interview with Dalou, although no mention of the I.S. was included. The forum was announced on a number of radio stations.

Our recruitment chairman organized a contact calling for the forum.

3. Forum evaluation.

By and large, the forum was quite successful. Quite early, we tried to make this into a movement event, stressing that it was a benefit for the Attica Brothers. Members were quite aggressive in selling tickets, leafletting, etc. We also realized that no matter what the turn-out, the I.S./Red Tide could only benefit by being associated with this kind of activity. This in turn helped inspire members to push the event.

The idea of selling tickets beforehand was also important, since it gave a tone of seriousness to the event and helped raise more money than could have been collected simply at the forum. Also having the leaflets and posters printed, while expensive, also gave the forum a serious look.

The program of the forum itself was impressive. All the speeches were quite good, and along with the film, made for a varied and interesting evening. Most of our contacts were quite impressed and moved by the whole program.

The auditorium was well decorated with pictures of Malcolm X, George Jackson, Attica posters, and a beautiful banner reading "Defend Attica Brothers." (made in Seattle) Having WP on each seat was also a good way to introduce the paper.

A few mistakes were made which should not be repeated. For the first week we were not clear that we were to make this a "big" event and we didn't set into high gear until after this valuable week was lost. Part of this was due to lack of guidance as to what was possible or expected from the national office. But this was still no excuse. The price of the forum was not included on the leaflet and should have been. Also, we should have invited the United Prisoners Union to co-sponsor the event, which would have given it a broader base. As it was, Popeye did a good deal of work for us on the event, including helping to set up the press conference and speaking at it as well as the forum.

The speeches themselves, while interesting, suffered from some political problems. Dalou tended to stress the theme that America is Attica, that is, that conditions in society are similar to those in Attica. Even Jack's presentation bent the stick too far in this direction. This comparison is quite misleading -- it creates misconceptions about the strength of reformism in America and its material base. All the presentations, including Jack's, had little to say about the working class, the unions, rank-and-file caucuses, etc, other than stating the need for revolution. Little distinctions were drawn between workers and prisoners, between workers movements and prisoners struggles.

Also, IS members were not well-prepared to ask/answer questions and make points during the discussion, especially on the problems raised above.

It would have been helpful if Dalou would have made some mention of either the IS or Workers Power to make some kind of link between the two main speakers. Had Dalou been approached on this he probably would have agreed.

4. National Preparation.

One of our main difficulties in preparing for the forum was the almost complete lack of national preparation and guidance for the tour. We received no background information about Attica, sample press releases, or biographical information about Dalou. We were not even told that he was Puerto Rican, which would have enabled us to approach the people active in Puerto Rican Solidarity Day with whom we had worked. This also meant that we had to cull out information on Attica from WO which had little about the current trial situation.

Even more distressing, we were not informed that Dalou and Jack were carrying the film "Attica" with them, which could have been publicized along with the speakers. Many people who were sold tickets wanted to know if the film was being shown. By the time we found out about the film and decided to show it, it was just two days before the forum. This also limited the appeal of the event.

Forum evaluation, page three.

We would have also appreciated some guidance on sponsorship and endorsement. We were inadequately informed on the split in the Attica Legal Defense Committee and so had almost had much of our publicity include the name of the wrong Attica committee. We were not informed of the position of the National Lawyers Build on Attica (it had been a priority for them, and had we contacted them they would have probably endorsed the forum and helped to build it) Finally, it would have been helpful (although we understand that it was unavoidable) to have been given more time to plan the event, especially in order to make contact with black and brown groups which might have endorsed it. The East Bay Exec feels that the EC must pay more attention to the details of such tours if we are to seriously develop some influence in black and brown movements as well as the Maoist milieu. We recommend that the EC consider the following for future tours:

1. Branches should be notified well in advance so that co-sponsors can be found in time, leaflets printed, etc.
2. All branches should receive a kit of pertinent information about the event, including sample press releases, leaflets, posters, history, biographical information, as well as suggestions on how to build a successful event.
3. Research should be done on national groups which might be approached for co-sponsorship/endorsement.
4. Some person or committee should be put in charge of the tour who will be responsible for handling these tasks.
5. In areas where universities give honorariums for speakers on campus, we should take advantage of this and set up campus speeches. Often they pay up to \$500 for such speeches, which would greatly help defray the expenses of such tours (plane travel, etc.)

REPLY TO THE EC STATEMENT ON THE CLEVELAND BRANCH

The EC statement on the Cleveland Branch fundamentally misrepresents the situation that prevailed in the branch and the action that the majority took to deal with it. The task of the Cleveland branch and the national organization is to realize the turn to agitation not to nit-pick over the past. The IS is making not only a turn toward agitation but also a turn toward being a Bolshevik organization with strong national leadership that actively intervenes in the branches to make sure the national perspectives are being implemented. This is essential if the IS is ever to make its politics a reality in the working class movement.

The membership and the branches have a responsibility to play a critical role when necessary in this process of developing leadership. The EC statement, its representation of the Cleveland situation to the organization, and its position on that are wrong. Without getting into an endless diatribe over the minutiae of the thing, we would like to state what was the case in Cleveland. We would like to state this from a position of support of the general notion of the EC's increasing interaction with the branches.

CW was removed as organizer because he had 1) proven unable to build a collaborative exec. 2) proven unable to work with the fractions and help organize their activity. 3) working in a sectarian and factional manner within the branch, inflating differences and furthering divisions ... 4) acting in a thoroughly unprofessional manner, becoming one of those most involved in political-personal hostilities rather than being the least involved.

These are hardly "marginal and vague political grounds" as is the EC's charge. They go right to the heart of branch functioning - to the question of whether the branch is able to realize the turn or not. This is anything but marginal - it is central to what the organization is about at this time.

This was the reality of the Cleveland situation and no matter how good a rank and file conference might have been or how many copies of WP were sold can't change this. As important as these activities are and acknowledging the valuable work that was accomplished by members of the branch, the fact remains: the Cleveland branch was not organized as a collective with collectively functioning & fractions and a branch life to bring workers around.

CW is indeed a talented and valuable member of the organization, but as a branch organizer - an organizer and leader of the political life and functioning of the branch, he was clearly inadequate to the task. In a Bolshevik organization it should be a simple matter to find a more suitable position to utilize the talents of such a person. Yet it wasn't.

The EC's position was to oppose the removal of CW as organizer "on clear political grounds." What were these grounds? The first is CW's pioneer work in establishing the concept of organizer as political leader of the branch. The EC's characterization of the four as "victims of this unsupported pioneer work" is hogwash. The implication is that the branch majority was opposed to this new concept of the organizer, and wanted him to continue as administrator/lackey. No one wanted to remove CW because he tried to be a strong organizer. The point was, he failed at it.

The other part of the EC's political grounds concerned CW's achievements. As we have said above, when it concerned the core of the branch's functioning, CW was sorely lacking in professional leadership ability.

Yet the heaviest charge levelled against the Cleveland branch majority is not even made directly. To read the EC statement one would think that there were four comrades who clearly supported and worked for the national line and ten others who did not. No direct assertion is made of this but the implication is quite clear. No evidence is given in support, naturally because there isn't any, and the EC knows this fullwell.

The EC's "clear political grounds" are anything but clear. Yet it is on the basis of their own vague political grounds that they say they "no doubt" had the right to enforce their decision on the branch... i.e. place it in receivership. This is absurd. Even the most twisted view of the situation does not show any imminent danger in the branch that would even remotely justify such administrative sanctions.

If there was a branch majority that was sabotaging the national perspectives or preparing a split, such action might be appropriate but there was nothing in any way resembling that going on in Cleveland. In fact the Cleveland majority was able to work quite collaboratively with the national organizer GC in reorganizing the branch and drawing up new perspectives towards the turn to agitation. The weakness of the EC position led it to substitute administrative threats for political argument. A national leadership cannot be built and consolidated on the basis of such threats.

In the long run, the only thing that will prove anything either way in this matter will be results. The record of the branch will really decide the question. The Cleveland branch is ready and beginning to move forward to realize the turn to agitation. That is why it acted as it did to install a more collaborative and professional organizer.

CB, MF, SG, CK, SK, TM, BP, KP, MR, TS

FINAL EC STATEMENT ON CLEVELAND SITUATION

No organization can carry out a major turn in the nature and character of its political work without undergoing more or less severe internal crises. The entire IS should congratulate itself in that we are moving toward carrying out our turn toward agitation without splits or even the development of hardened lines of factional struggle. The turn is still far from completed, but the EC now feels confident that the road ahead is clear and that the success of this turn is assured.

It is the assessment of the EC, that the IS suffered one major setback in the process leading up to our conscious understanding of the need to carry out this turn, and in the beginning of its implementation. This setback was the irreconcilable breakdown of collaborative relations in the Cleveland branch. It is the unanimous opinion of the EC that the branch minority, Cal, Barbara, Anne and Doug were the members of our national organization who first became aware of the need for such a turn, who first understood the main outlines of the turn, and who first began the fight to put them into practice. It is our opinion that in their isolation from the majority of the Cleveland branch, they were victims of their own foresight. It is from this viewpoint that we are in fundamental opposition to the statement of the Cleveland branch majority: "Reply to the EC Statement on the Cleveland Branch."

We reject the assertion in the Cleveland majority statement that CW was the cause of the branch problems because he was an incompetent organizer. The charge is disingenuous, created after the fact. Indeed there was opposition to CW being the organizer prior to his even starting the job. Incompetence has only been raised right at the very end as a justification for the past problems of the branch. These problems had nothing to do with CW's competence as an organizer; he is an excellent organizer, amongst the best we have, but as we have already made clear, with his political conception of where the organization should be going. A conception with which the EC is in firm agreement.

The fact that the Cleveland majority statement, even now, dismisses questions like WP distribution and the most successful conferences we have put on as mere incidentals to the job of an organizer demonstrates the political differences that arise in the Cleveland situation. The projection of IS as a growing, national revolutionary socialist organization through our newspaper and open IS conferences are far from incidentals, indeed they are the very foundation of everything we are trying to do in the present period. Without this orientation even our industrial work will become meaningless.

We should also state quite clearly that accusations from the Cleveland majority (a group that on its own admission constituted a secret faction in the branch and is still organized to fight the EC solution to the Cleveland situation) that CW's tendency toward factionalism created the problems is nothing short of dishonest.

We welcome the assertions of the Cleveland branch majority of their total commitment to the present turn, and we agree with them that it is results that will be decisive. We also agree that what is important is to realize the turn, and not to nit-pick over the past. But failure to come to grips with the root causes of past problems, holds open the danger that we will continue paying for those past problems.

If the reasons given by the branch majority for the removal of CW as branch organizer are

to be accepted, the only questions in dispute were matters of personal style and competence. If that were all that were involved, there would be no way of explaining the intense personal heat and bitterness that developed on both sides. The four points listed, however, are nothing but symptomatic expressions of the fact that collaborative relations between CW and the branch majority had broken down. To go to the "heart" of the matter, we must explain why.

As we have tried to make clear in our original statement and in answering above the specific charges of the IO, CW was pressing for an outward looking, publicly aggressive and self-confident organization. This was while the rest of us were still learning to cope with the conservatizing grind of day-to-day trade union work in a working class that is not yet (with rare exceptions) quite ready to move into decisive action. CW was prepared to give a lead in placing political considerations over personal ones at a time when the rest of the organization was still overly concerned with the reestablishment of supportive personal relations in reaction to the lacerating experience of years of factional warfare and isolation. CW pioneered the drive to make WP the important tool it should be as organizer and public face of the IS, at a time when most of the organization still felt the residual embarrassment of the old pre-split sectarian rag WP used to be. CW conceived and was the main organizer of the first IS rank and file conference at a time when ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ no other section of the organization had the self-confidence to risk such a venture. Its success beyond the most optimistic predictions ushered in a period of renewed self-confidence for the organization-- setting the tone for an enthusiastic, outward-looking convention and a recruitment drive in the "soft-Maoists" milieu.

At each stage CW and the rest of the branch minority stood ahead of the IS as a whole, including the EC, and anticipated the direction the organization would have to move in if it were to overcome its narrowness and isolation. There was resistance throughout the organization to the direction they pointed. Rarely was this resistance consciously political or worked out. Rather, it can be best characterized as the legacy of the bitter path we have all been forced to travel to get to where we are today. The best proof of this is the enthusiasm every part of the organization feels for the new direction after living down the trauma of the first steps.

At the point where the EC, as a body, became aware and convinced of the new direction for the organization, and took the lead, we too came under fire. Inertia was not the only cause of this resistance. There were also the necessary correctives to a leadership striking out in an uncharted direction exhibiting the crudeness and one-sidedness of a new direction that we did not yet have a full and rounded understanding of. But as a collaborative leadership team, charged with the responsibility of leading the entire organization, we have been able to withstand this pressure, to learn from it, and to emerge with our reputation as a leadership body intact.

rediculous

The Cleveland branch minority comrades were not so fortunate. They became the object of an underground campaign that ran throughout the organization. They served as a lightning rod, attracting the brunt of resistance to the turn that was unable to find other effective expression. With neither the resources, prestige, nor responsibility of the national leadership, they were not able to parry this attack, nor even fully understand its character.

The division in the Cleveland branch was the expression, not fundamentally of a local conflict, but the focussed expression of a national conflict throughout the organization.

Numerous comrades throughout the organization kept in touch with the problems giving encouragement, support and reinforcement to the conflicting sides. Even members of the EC prior to our development of a team approach, and prior to our understanding of the problems, lined up on both sides, helping sustain the conflict rather than seeking at each point to suppress it. We learned a lesson--and the rest of the cadre should learn a lesson as well.

We are genuinely pleased that the Cleveland majority is in support of the turn we are making and we welcome the perspectives they have developed for putting that turn into effect in their area. It is the case, however, that in the past they have been resistant to the efforts of CW and the branch minority to initiate key parts of this same turn. It is the EC's view that at this stage, the stage at which the separation of the contending sides in the Cleveland branch has considerably reduced the contradictions which were paralysing IS in the area, the debate on the issues should stop. We are determined that in this period of fantastic opportunities for the development of IS into a working class organization the branches should not get bogged down in trivial debates about past conflicts. The EC has the right to ask the support of all members in this undertaking. We should also make clear that any attempt to continue this debate on a subterranean level will neither force the EC to change its ~~XXX~~ declared position nor to go unanswered in the internal organs of the organization.

Insofar as they are subject to abuse or made scapegoat for their correct foresight, we solidarize ourselves with the Cleveland branch minority. These comrades are the victims of the one serious defeat the IS has suffered in carrying out this present turn. The EC takes upon itself the responsibility of assuring these comrades that they can have confidence in our organization that they will be subject to no further abuse. To press the struggle against the Cleveland branch minority any further is to press it against the EC as well.