

## GARY TYLER PERSPECTIVES

The I.S. began work around the Gary Tyler case in the middle of April. Actually it was the Detroit Red Tide which took up the case by calling the first demonstration to free Gary Tyler outside of New Orleans, on May 1. This extremely successful demonstration turned out close to 200 people. Most important was the participation of young blacks, most of whom had never been politically active before. The success of the Detroit demo, and the ability of the GT case to draw in new people, pushed the IS to take up the case in other cities. At first we proposed demos in 4 other cities. Very quickly, however, work on the case spread to most of the organization. Already 12 branches have organized demos, 10 of them highly successful. And several other branches have demos in the planning stages.

IS led committees to free GT have now completed a first round of demonstrations. At this point it is important for us to assess what we have accomplished and work out perspectives for future work.

### STRENGTHS

The GT case is the first defense case that the IS, as a national organization, has taken responsibility for. Thus far, our work in the Tyler defense has meant significant breakthroughs for us. It is forcing us to break out of old patterns of isolation and into new circles and levels of work.

Gary Tyler work is also our first serious work as a national organization in the black community. Through this work we are breaking out of the isolation of being a Trotskyist sect on the left.

In the process the I.S. has already grown immeasurably. In Detroit, through the GT work, the Red Tide has been considerably strengthened. New members are learning politics and organizational skills through GT activity. The development and growing commitment of many has already led to healthy recruitment to the I.S..

Also, through work around GT, Red Tide chapters are being set up in cities outside of Detroit. Thus far, new Red Tide chapters have been set up in Chicago, Louisville, and Pittsburgh. The potential exists in several other cities as well.

Through our work, although not exclusively, the GT case is becoming known nationally. We were able to get coverage of the case in most of the black press and radio and television stations in cities where we worked. Through our efforts Hurricane Carter pushed the case on the Good Morning America show. Nationally we were able to mobilize several thousand people to activity around the case.

Because of the success of our demonstrations, we have won the respect of some of the leaders of the work in New Orleans and pushed the National Committee in New Orleans to take national work a bit more seriously, although there are still problems in this regard.

### WEAKNESSES

Although the work we have done on this case has been generally excellent and a real step forward for the organization, it has been relatively ad hoc. We did not plan to do GT work, or any sort of defense work at this time. Involvement in the case was started in one area, almost by accident. The work also began at a time when the organization was already overextended. (The first GT rally took

place on the first day of the UPS strike).

The work spread quickly because of the issue itself. Most people hearing the specifics of the GT case are immediately furious and open to doing something. Although this meant that the GT work was relatively easy to build, the way it was begun in the IS meant that we functioned without any sort of national perspective. In fact the work continually grew and spread faster than we expected at each stage and we were continually catching up in the center.

This meant that the personnel assigned at the center was done on an ad hoc basis. Often, this meant that GT work was assigned as a third or even fourth priority. Our commitment to the work at the center meant letting other work slide. (this was particularly true in terms of WP -- Gay; and the Detroit District - Mike P.)

In addition, our national work suffered from the fact that we got little assistance from the committee in New Orleans. For several reasons the New Orleans committee has focussed almost entirely on local work. That has meant that they have not sent out national press releases, lit packets, contacts lists, suggestions for work on speakers for rallies -- all necessary tools for building a national defense.

#### NEGOTIATIONS WITH NATIONAL COORDINATOR

In spite of the many difficulties, most of our work was a tremendous success, culminating in the Detroit rally on June 13. Mrs Tyler, Terry Tyler, Walter Collins, and two supporters attended from New Orleans. During the weekend we proposed the following overall perspective for a national Gary Tyler defense campaign which was generally accepted by Collins:

1. The New Orleans committee commit itself to national work. This would mean endorsing committees in other cities.
2. The IS would commit itself to setting up official committees where we have the resources to do so (10-14 cities).. We would build the committees on a non-sectarian basis.
4. Committees we set up would be set up on the following politics: racism is on the rise, the GT case is a symbol of racist 'justice' in America, and how it would take a movement to free him.
4. Those wishing to work on the case would be instructed, by New Orleans, to contact the existing local committees.
5. We agreed to take on additional specific tasks, in addition to setting up local committees, to build the national campaign: 1. Set up a Midwest Gary Tyler office in Detroit, 2. compile a national list of endorsers. 3. Compile a national press list, so that national press releases can be sent out from New Orleans. 5. Attempt to organize big name benefits in New York and possibly Chicago.

#### ONGOING WORK

The IS as an organization has committed itself to serious national defense work around the Gary Tyler case. That means that we are in the case until Gary is freed. It must be recognized at this point that defense work is not always smooth sailing, building bigger and bigger until success. A defense campaign has a number of material limitations. The timing is largely determined by events in the courts and the jails. There is a constant tension between

the "strictly legal approach" and a "political defense."

Also defense campaigns are not stable organizations or even ongoing movements. They are campaigns which must be constantly expanding, escalating the level of activities and opening to wider and wider circles. They exist largely in flashes. After a few months of mass activities they peak leaving an ongoing administration to deal with the apparatus and trappings of a successful campaign. The mass activity may be revived but this is more determined by the events in the courts than on acts of volunteerism or genius in organization.

The more successful the campaign, the more the focus of the campaign turns to the use of the media, working with big names, use of fundraising letters, sending speakers to established groups. Even mass activities will tend to put most activists in a passive role: benefit concerts and rallies, though larger, will tend to occur less frequently and will rely more on the media than on rank and file organization for building them.

The natural pressure, therefore, will be away from mass activities as the campaign grows. We have to be constantly pushing the other way. A key is to continue to focus the campaign around high school students. Not only is the natural identification with Gary a powerful force but it is in the high schools today where there are significant numbers of people, not burned or jaded by past defeats, that are willing to mobilize around this.

Although young people will be the motor force of our Gary Tyler work, they will not be the only ones we will attempt to involve. We will try to bring the case into our trade union work. We will also continually try to involve whites.