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Resist Board Meeting, Oct. 9, 1977

Resist

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Resistance to many forms of illegitimate authority is necessary to bring health to this country and make it a constructive force instead of a terror in the politics of nations.

— from A New Call to Resist Illegitimate Authority

December Grants

At our last meeting we lined up a few emergency grants, did some rejections, and put most of our applications on hold for our next meeting. Here they are:

NEWSPAPERS AND MEDIA

1. Common Sense - Northern California Alliance - 2448a Mission St., S.F. 94110
   A four year old newspaper, openly socialist perspective which covers a broad range of struggles in the Bay Area. They are in the process of making a transition from the newspaper being funded to selling the newspaper, becoming self-sustaining, etc. They are asking Resist for $1,000 for major promotional work, which initially means a subscription drive. We gave them $500 in 1974. Vanguard on the W. Coast has also supported this group.

2. Street Papers (formerly Suffolk Street Papers) Box 972, Smithtown, N.Y. 11787
   This is a community alternative newspaper, collectively produced, free distribution, openly socialist perspective. They are asking Resist for $500 to develop "sustaining" support group, to expand distribution into Nassau county and to develop their mailing list. We gave them $200 times 3 months in 7/75. Their source of funds seems to be from subscriptions and some fundraising activities.

3. Claridad, PO Box 318 Cooper Station, N.Y., N.Y. 10003
   This is the PSP's (Puerto Rican Socialist Party) weekly newspaper. They are asking Resist for $1,000 to launch a subscription campaign to establish a sustainers group. We gave them $500 in 1973. Their main source of funds seems to come from subscriptions.

4. Ithaca Rest of the News, 306 E 4 State St., Ithaca, N.Y. 14850
   A radio collective which produces political issue tapes available to the Ithaca community and available to other groups around the country. They do 3 shows a week on local radio stations. They seem generally open about socialism to their constituency. An independent organization. IF ANYONE HAS A TAPE RECORDER THEY CAN BRING TO THE MEETING, WE CAN LISTEN TO SAMPLES OF THEIR TAPES. They are promoting their shows and sending a catalogue of their tapes to groups around the country-s-hoping to establish "program exchange contracts with radio stations throughout the country. Estimate the project to take 4-6 months. They are asking Resist for $1,00 in all but have specific budget items. They have gotten turned down from straight foundations, get occasional $ from Cornell. Two former collective members now work at LNS in N.Y.

5. Middletown c/o 72 Home Ave. Middletown, Conn. 06457
   A newspaper begun in 1976 by politically active people - Wesleyan students and community activists. They have expanded to include some union people and some from black community. They are presently applying for non-profit status. Want the paper to reflect issues in the city and inspire and support struggles and organizing. They are asking Resist for $425 for one issue of the newspaper. They get some money from the College Body Committee at Wesleyan, waiting to hear from Haymarket. Some money from subscriptions. Awaiting a report from Dick Ohmann.
2. Save Ourselves Organizing Committee - 7010 Reynolds St., Pittsburgh, Pa. 15217

This is a N.A.M. initiated group focusing on wife abuse, rape, sexual harassment, etc. They claim that they are the only visible strong feminist organizing going on in Pittsburgh. They are seeking some funds in support of their campaign to get the city to provide free self-defense classes in working class communities for women. They will be going before the city hearing in November. At present, they have no other source of funds... have stayed away from foundations with strings attached.

LEGAL, MILITARY, INVESTIGATIVE, ETC.

1. Citizen Soldier (formerly Safe Return) 175 Fifth Ave. 1010, N.Y. 10010

They are organizing to insure a left presence in newly anticipated AFGE union in the armed forces. They are mailing brochures to GIs to make contacts with Rank and Files. They are asking Resist for $200 to make a trip to 8 bases in Maryland, Virginia and Delaware to talk with pro-union GIs who responded positively to their mailing. Louis (Louis) came up with a positive report on the group. Awaiting a response to letter sent to Dave Cortwright at IPS in D.C. No other sources of funds at present.
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Minutes of October 9, 1977

Present: were Frank Brodhead, Wayne O'Neil, Margery Davies, Paul Lauter and Louis Kampf.

This meeting was a makeup from the meeting originally scheduled for New York two weeks earlier but postponed. Apologies all around for those who have been inconvenienced by scheduling and rescheduling. Our next meeting will be at our NEW OFFICE: 324 Somerville Ave, Somerville, MA 02143 (tel: 617-623-5110).

There were two main topics discussed:

LIBERATION MAGAZINE

Liberation will not be continued by the present editorial group, and they approached Paul a month ago to see if Resist might be interested in taking it over. Paul wrote to various people and talked to some. The general response was that it was a good idea for Liberation to continue, and that it was a good idea to combine with Resist. But no one really wants to put time or money into it. The main question people raised was: who will take central responsibility. Paul cannot take central responsibility at this time. He did not make clear in his letter that he wanted to reconstitute Liberation, with a heavy emphasis on things outside the US, and on Washington. This would take a lot of money.

Liberation has to have a decision by the end of October. After discussion, our decision was: a) We cannot pick up Liberation now. b) We want to investigate Paul's ideas over the next six months. c) We'll offer to send the Resist newsletter to Liberation subscribers to fill out their subs, asking people after a short time to send a card if they want to continue.

(note from Frank: Liberation has responded positively to this proposal. We are going to meet with lawyers soon to see what it possible. It seems to me that we can hope for an increase in contributions to offset the extra cost (about $400/issue) of sending our newsletter to Liberation subscribers; and it seems a worthwhile risk to keep open the possibility of reconstituting Liberation in the near future.)

MONEY

Frank did a memo about money (enclosed) which was the basis of our discussion.

If we consolidate with Liberation we'll ask the Ferrys to help finance the consolidation. We'll also propose -- by way of George Vickers -- a tax-
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The Money Situation

The money situation is both worse than I thought and not as bad as it looks.

Worse than I thought: in both August and September we took in less than $2000. There has been a steady fall in pledge income, averaging only about $1100/month between June and September. Newsletter income was only about $600/month during the same period. And the number of pledges actually sending in money between July and now (since I've been counting) averaged only 75/month -- only about half of the number who receive pledge mailing.

This adds up to us only giving out nine small grants over the summer. And because of the low money situation we cancelled several meetings, have been seriously inconveniencing/disappointing people who hope to get grants, have yet to do a mailing to find new contributors this fall, etc.

Not as bad as it looks: During the first five months of 1977, we actually took in more money than in the comparable period of 1976. The trouble is partly the summer: we took in only $10,000 between June and September, while we took in $16,000 in the same period of 1976.

Some of the fall in income was because we did two double-issue newsletters, thus saving $1,000 but resulting in a fall in newsletter income. My own feeling now is that we should do a monthly newsletter without fail, even if we have to occasionally cut it to four pages.

Some of the other factors behind the fall in income include the fact that the Ferry's gave us $1,000 less than the previous year; and the previous summer also brought two $1,000 contributions from others. No such luck this year.

The Outlook

... is not as hopeless as it looks. My own feeling is that if we collectively decide that we have the patience and energy/time to do a modest amount of face-to-face fund raising between now and the end of the winter, Resist could be put back on its feet again and become a more-or-less self-sustaining funding organization of modest size.
For the immediate future, I recommend that we don’t hire anyone to replace Madge. That and our lower office costs would mean that the base costs of the organization are about $1,000/month; while the newsletter costs an additional $550. (The Free Press has just given us a ‘friend of the people’ discount).

Our pledge income should continue to more than cover our office costs; and the newsletter income should more than cover its cost. So even if we do not recover to the income levels of 1975-1977, we should still be able to give out $500/month in grants between now and Xmas on the basis of more or less current levels of cost and income.

In January, moreover, we will receive a fair amount of money in newsletter sub renewals. There are also a certain number of annual pledges who get letters in January; and the Ferry’s have contributed $3000 during each of the (at least) last two winters.

For these reasons, it seems to me that we should not entertain any thoughts at the present about closing down. There is a reasonable expectation that there will be an upturn in income big enough to enable us to do a worthwhile number of grants between now and next spring.

My own feeling, though, is that we cannot be content with a mere cyclical upturn; and that we should set some specific goals for increasing our monthly pledge income and the size of the base of Resist contributors. That is, I would like us to make a determination to put some energy into reviving Resist between now and March 1, or so, and to try to decide what level of monthly grants (for example) by March would then justify a decision to continue.

My intention is not to lock us into some formula. But if we are to continue with the possibility of a future re-evaluation, it would be psychologically necessary for me to have an idea about what people’s expectations are. Insofar as this is a money question, I would like it if I could get an idea what people consider a critical level of monthly grants, or a ratio of grants/costs, etc.

Future Plans

... are partly related to our expectations. That is, if we think that we would only be satisfied by a level of monthly grants that is beyond our present time and energy to reach, we should not try to continue. I myself think that, on the basis of what kinds of demands I have experienced being placed on Resist by people who need money, that we need to be able to give out $1500/month to really justify continuing.

I don’t think this is impossible to meet. It would mean 50 more small pledges, a few large pledges, a 10% increase in newsletter circulation, and a tiny increase in the number of people responding to the newsletter appeals. Even this small increase would probably be enough. (If each active board member added one $5 pledge each month ... )
R Of course I think we should do much more than that. There are three small mailings scheduled for the near future. If we decide to continue until March I will definitely put the mailing list on the computer, and we can do mailings more easily and frequently to our own list. I have a few ideas about how to use the newsletter, the inactive board members, and our past contributors list better. Even just the cut made in basic office expenditures between May and November (about $900), should increase significantly the number of grants we can make.

Other Things

I think I have partly erred in spending most of my thinking on saving money rather than increasing income since coming to work. I think I have to take a fair amount of responsibility for the fall in income over the summer, and our resulting depression.

But I also worry about the board. I think we are locked in a circle of money & morale. I think everything about being on the board must be a drag when we are short of money; and I'm pretty certain that our ability to substantially increase the size of grants that we give each month depends on the willingness of board members to be more active in fundraising.

In particular, I think we need an immediate medium amount of cash to get us on our feet. Say $1000 to $2000. I still haven't mailed out the checks for the grants we voted last week. (We've run into an unanticipated cash flow problem; literally -- the post office is about five days behind in forwarding our mail). As a peace of mind matter, I would like to henceforth keep a bank balance of more than $75. Etc. There are some moving expenses, an imminent mailing to the RA list, etc. that have to be covered also.

Whatever medium and long-run plans we make to continue and grow, we should also think about how to get some re-start up capital.

Frank