

National Committee for the Defense of Political Prisoners - 12th meeting Feb. 20, 19721. Criticisms, Discussion in general of Benefit on Fri. night Feb. 18 --

In general, many of the problems which arose during and after the benefit are ones which we will know how to deal with later. Some things couldn't be helped, such as the fact that there was very bad weather on the night of the benefit, which was why attendance wasn't as high as it would have been otherwise. For the most part, criticisms and suggestions for a better benefit next time ran as follows:

- a. Some people who were supposed to be part of the entertainment never got a chance to perform at all, which is a very bad reflection on all of us. There are NO excuses for this at all, no matter what we would like to pretend. What made the situation exceptionally bad was the fact that a few of the acts came VERY late but still went on, while a group or two that never went on are the same ones that were there ON TIME, and very anxious to perform. In particular, this was the case of sister Louise Jeffers, who also put something like \$190 for her act, and another dance group, composed mainly of younger brothers and sisters. At the same time, many jazz acts were on stage for at least 30 minutes, instead of the allotted 18 minutes. Although we started 1½ hours late (1:30 a.m. instead of 12 a.m.) waiting for people who came late due to bad weather, this should have served as the rationale for us to cut acts as much as necessary, so that everyone could perform, not just big-name acts.
- b. Some of the groups who supposedly were "donating" their time and talents for the benefit asked for unreasonable amounts of money for so-called travelling expenses. To illustrate the discrepancy here, one group asked for only \$4 for travelling expenses, whereas people in other groups asked for anywhere from \$50 - \$150! It seems that if they had been sincere about really helping to bring in funds for the political prisoners, they would have dealt with renting some kind of van to transport themselves and instruments to and from the benefit. In this case, expenses should have been roughly no more than maybe \$20!
- c. Next time it should be pointed out ahead of time that when tickets are collected as the people come in, we keep the half which has the number on it. This is so that we can later keep track of which tickets were turned in, which ones are still unaccounted for, and so forth.
- d. More information about just who is entertainment should be given to everyone so that as they arrive and claim that they are supposed to be let in free, there will be no questions about it. Also, when questions come up as far as entertainment goes, and when they ask for specific people to deal with a problem, either we should know where those people can be reached, or we should also have that information to help them. Specifically, a lot of times people wanted to see Frankie or Lumumba, and since they were especially busy all night, others should have had (known) some of the information to deal with the problems.

2. Letters from Ricardo deLeon and Herbert Blyden -

The letter from Ricardo DeLeon was to the committee in general and Lumumba in particular. It dealt with much subjective, generalized criticisms that many people didn't follow. But some were very valid such as the criticism that the BPP has not been doing in the Black community any real, meaningful organizing. It also spoke of a "contradiction between those in maximum and those in minimum". Blyden's letter was basically the same content. One of the letters also mentioned that nothing concrete had been done about point # 2 of the Attica Liberation Front's demands.

This was the demand for passage of political prisoners into a non-imperialist country.

3. Tombs 7 -

The D.A. has been successful on separating the Tombs 7 on the basis that to have them all together would be a security risk, and they have been broken up on the weapons charges.

4. Discussion on problems of supporting political prisoners -

Frankie ran down some things in length on the problems involved in organizing community support around the issue of political prisoners. Some of the things mentioned were:

- a. There are not enough "movement lawyers" to go around. At most, there are 15-20 of them, and even their politics are questionable. (They still for the most part have an interest in this system.)
- b. Some brothers do not become political until after they are thrown in jail. So it is all but impossible to rally support for someone who was sent to jail for ripping off another brother or sister, just because he is political now.
- c. It was also pointed out that many times when subjective-type letters and invalid criticisms are sent to specific people, and then they righteously send back letters which are smokers and deal with the reality of the criticisms, these same brothers then shift their sob stories to others (often sisters).
- d. It was pointed out that often pre-trial publicity of a case is not-good because it prejudices the pigs involved in the case, making them constantly postpone the case. Sometimes it is much better to wait until the actual trial to show the pigs that the particular brother or sister has a lot of outside support. This has specifically worked in the case of Mshina (Thom Berry).
- e. It was also pointed out that too many so-called revolutionary brothers are not learning from others' mistakes. Too many of them are being busted over pieces found on them and other such things.
- f. Brothers who claim that they have been "forgotten" should remember that there are many trials going on now - Harlem 4, Rap, Carlos Feliciano, Tombs 7, Mshina, Kimu, etc., etc., to name a few.

5. Vigil at the Tombs -

Hunter College BSU is sponsoring a vigil at the Tombs, Mon. Feb. 21, from 5-9 p.m. in memoration of Malcolm X and all political prisoners.

6. H. Rap Brown -

March 6 starts the pre-trial hearings on H. Rap Brown, and the other 3 brothers.

7. Reception for Mrs. Georgia Jackson and Inez Williams -

On Feb. 25, Mrs. Georgia Jackson, mother of George Jackson, and Inez Williams, mother of Fleeta Drumgo, will arrive in New York. There will be a reception for them on Feb. 28th, at the YWCA on 8th ave. and 51st St. They were invited to New York by the Womens' International League for Peace and Freedom.