

REPORT ON FUND RAISING ACTIVITIES OF L.A. BRANCH
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During the past year we have had considerable success in raising money for party activities outside our membership. Income from this source was remarkably higher last year than it has been in previous years even though Los Angeles has consistently raised money from these sources for many years.

The following figures, indicating yearly lump sums of income from the various sources show the important place that this outside fund raising occupies in our overall finances. At the same time the backbone of our finances remains members sustainers.

<u>1968</u>	<u>1969</u>	
15,294	15,188	Members sustainers to branch
248	216	Coffee and soda
1,229	1,173	Forums
706	2,023	Non-member sustainers and misc. contributions
1,284	2,253	Socials and collections at socials

For the purpose of this report, outside money raising is abstracted from other branch political activities. In actual practice the fund raising flows from and is geared to all other activities. In mid-1968 we established a members sustainer system. By early 1969 use of this system, coupled with an equally important careful curb on unnecessary expenses, had stabilized our branch finances. We were able to cover most basic expenses -- \$15 per member per month to the N.O., organizer, rent, etc. -- with the sustainers and money from forums, coffee and soda. During 1969 our average monthly per capita pledge from members rose from \$19.50 to \$22.00, and in February of 1970 we raised our N.O. sustainer to \$16.00 per member.

Having taken the crises out of internal finances, the branch turned toward raising money from outside sources. Comrades are encouraged to give to the party through their sustainers, not through large contributions at socials. Likewise we have a policy that the party must be reimbursed for all goods and services rendered to outside movements by individual comrades. If comrades are in a good enough financial position to be able to subsidize phone calls, leaflets, etc. for these movements, they are encouraged to raise their party sustainer and collect the money laid out.

The Periphery

Basic to all outside money raising is, of course, a contributing periphery. In general we do not ask anyone who might contribute to party activities to contribute to such activities as the antiwar movement, defense cases, etc., since thousands of others will contribute to these movements if searched out. Conversely, we view everyone who has contributed to one of these movements in which we are involved as a potential contributor to the party.

Very few people will enter or remain in this periphery under their own steam. We must organize this work just like any other. We compile

lists of past, present and potential contributors and then assign comrades to do the necessary weekly follow up with specific contributors. Each person must be periodically brought up to date on current activities of the party (if not involved in them), visited, welcomed when they come to our hall, and made to understand the concrete use to which their contribution is being put. This tactic of assigning specific comrades to work with specific contributors on an individual basis is one of the reasons for the sharp increase of income from these sources in 1969.

Some of our contributors have been around the party since the radicalization of the forties or earlier, but recent world events and party activities have re-inspired them to contribute more heavily when talked to, and brought around us many new contributors. In general the potential for money raising has radically improved during the last couple of years. Our aim is to consolidate a money giving periphery out of the current radicalization, and during 1969 we took big steps in that direction.

Non-Member Sustainers

Needless to say our most treasured source of outside income lies here with regularly paid monthly pledges of non-members. Our aim with every peripheral element is for them to make a regular pledge whether they are ex-comrades, potential recruits, or supporters of one specific area of our activities.

Making a regular pledge is motivated to these people just as to comrades. This type of contribution allows the branch to budget more efficiently. In our actual budget, however, this category is separated out and not depended on (opposed to the members sustainers) because they tend to be less stable. These pledges are collected consciously every month; we don't just wait for them to be brought in.

Included in this category is a \$20 per month "rent" from the YSA and, beginning late 1969, a similar monthly amount from the bookstore. Sources of money are available to the YSA and not the party; some people would rather contribute to a youth organization than to the party. In this period there is every opportunity for a radical bookstore to make a profit if a rational system of record keeping and controls is instituted. As we expand use of our bookstore, this branch subsidy will increase.

Social Events - (Political & "Non-Political")

It is best to establish a basic pattern of a few adequately spaced big socials held year after year. Then both comrades and periphery will begin looking forward to them. The periphery comes to expect being approached for big donations at these certain times. It doesn't take long to establish these traditions. We've had only two Militant banquets but already it is looked forward to. Successful outside fund

raising requires the allocation of several people to this work. Forces utilized for these affairs include people drawn from periphery and comrades not engaged in external activities.

All social events must be money raising events. We plan and review every aspect of our socials from the beginning with the view of profit, as well as whether people enjoy themselves. Even at smaller events it has never hurt attendance to charge admission and to handle the refreshment concession for a 100% profit.

The May Day and Fall Militant banquets are our two biggest money raising affairs. They have been major events that politically inspired comrades and periphery. Planning begins months in advance. A political theme is set. Lists are made of all people who might come, a mailing sent out, then followed up by personal phone calls pushing advance sale of tickets. Our last banquet was attended by about 130 people (we have only 54 comrades in the branch.) Cultivating the periphery pays off. In the case of people who might make a large contribution, we try to visit them and line the contribution up in advance of the collection speech, as "seed" money. This often results in large "surprise" donations from new people or others we hadn't expected to contribute.

On beverages: we serve a free, simple, alcoholic punch during the cocktail hour and unlimited quantities of free wine during the meal. Wine is less expensive than hard liquor or fancy drinks and goes down easily. By collection pitch time everyone feels warm and generous. Buy wine in gallon jugs and transfer to smaller, attractive table bottles.

On food: people should feel they have gotten their ticket's worth out of the food, freeing other money for the collection. It sometimes helps the atmosphere on special occasions to have the food served by comrades waiters and waitresses. Serve plenty of relishes, bread and butter, and salad, with an inexpensive type of meat. Cost per person for serving turkey dinner (the cheapest meat), runs about \$1.70. Or another style is buffet with all food donated. Whatever the food or style, the point is to figure out before hand what it will cost, plan on a large profit even on student tickets. We have been selling tickets for \$5.00 and \$2.50, so a large chunk of profit comes from dinners alone.

On the collection: this is placed at a point on the program where we think the audience will be most responsive to such an appeal. We generally use the "hard sell" or "Novack" approach -- pitching the appeal around a specific expansion project the party is undertaking and then asking, or pleasantly demanding, some specific amount of money from the audience to finance this project. The work of contacting individual contributors in advance pays off here because we have an idea of where to start -- \$200, \$100, etc. The collector works slowly down: all \$50s, all \$20s, \$10s, \$5s, \$1s, then empty your pockets.

Caution: Hard sell collections that raise hundreds of dollars are a real inspiration to our periphery too. But they shouldn't be used too many times during a year, probably two or three times at the most.

Smaller, less formal socials such as New Years party, a summer picnic in the park, and a summer shiskabob in a comrade's back yard, are also tradition. These raise less money (between \$100 and \$150) but are designed to give comrades and periphery a chance to keep acquainted and relax. On a smaller scale, we do the preliminary work of calling up etc. for these events also. Often peripheral people will contribute a fifth of spirits to a social affair.

Rummage Sales

Our two rummage sales raise about \$650 per year. The advantage here is that the money comes totally outside of our membership and periphery. We generally try to keep away from non-political money raising events, particularly small ones, but this twice yearly event is such a huge money raiser that it cannot be ignored. Most cities probably have available store fronts that can be rented for one or two days to sell the rummage in. It's best to rent a place that houses rummage sales year round; then no publicity on the sale is needed. All that is necessary is to collect a literal mountain of discarded clothes, kitchen utensils, toys, books, and anything else. The periphery helps here, but this year we plan to try collections in college dorms at the end of the spring semester.

Book Bazaars

We have had success several times with book bazaars. The most successful are those that contain a large number of political books. The books are collected from 1) ex-comrades and periphery who have decided after many years that they no longer need many of their books; 2) donations of libraries of deceased; 3) culling read, duplicate, or unwanted novels and other books from current libraries of comrades and periphery. We could also probably collect books through campus drives. As with rummage sales, comrades are given first crack at the best of the books through a presale.

Use of Headquarters: Forums, Coffee and Soda, etc.

These regular branch functions can be real money raisers if approached from that point of view. Coffee, soda, cake, etc. is provided as a convenience for comrades and contacts, but if they went to a restaurant they would have to pay for it anyway. We should get that money. One temptation to resist is providing top quality soda and expensive cakes. Serving these can destroy the profit from the entire effort. If correctly planned and carefully watched a 100% profit is possible. Over the period of a year, this adds up to the equivalent of another large money raising event. There is generally an unfortunate tendency among both comrades and friends to lapse into the habit of just help-

ing themselves to a cup of coffee or a soda because they are working on a mailing -- or some similar excuse. For this reason, a very close watch must be kept on the income-expense ratio, and when it slips much below the 100% mark, the branch should investigate and find the leak.

Forums are also consistent money raisers simply in the course of using them as propaganda forums. Pitfalls to be avoided that can eat up profit are 1) maintaining mailing lists of people who haven't come in months; 2) perpetually expensive leaflets; 3) extensive paid advertisements in underground, campus or bourgeois media; 4) travel expenses or fees for speakers. A small mailing and selective advertising (much is available free) will bring out approximately the same number of people. Exceptions are made for forums of particular importance or interest. On the other hand it is good to cultivate relations with numerous noted leftists and others who will bring big crowds into our halls. The person at the door should strictly collect the admission price from everyone, except in the most dire circumstances. The person or committee planning forums should assume the responsibility of assuring this profit for the forums.

When outside organizations use our facilities to run leaflets, put out mailings, make phone calls, etc., the party should be reimbursed at least the cost of these goods and services. This holds true also when a comrade working in the organization does the phoning, or mimeoing. Hundreds of dollars can easily be poured into these organizations (and out of our treasury) through our goods and services. A system of keeping track, billing and collecting should be set up.

Also, comrades working fulltime for outside organizations should get paid by that organization whenever possible.

As we continue to grow more and more, money will be coming into our headquarters and, concurrently, more and more people. This necessitates a tightening up of procedures in handling income. Concretely, no money should be left lying around in any part of the H.Q. Large sums of money should be counted or receipted behind closed doors. Not only can significant sums of money be lost through petty theft, but any loss of a large sum of money can wreck havoc with the branch budget, create an aura of suspicion, and undermine the desire of both comrades and periphery to donate to an organization that just loses its money. It's best to handle these kinds of problems before they happen.

In conclusion, none of these methods for raising money and holding on to it by themselves guarantee a sound branch financial base. They must be taken together in the context of a budget and projection set by the branch as a whole as part of our political perspectives. Political motivation rather than harangue coupled with persistent follow up are the best ways to proceed. This allows planning ahead since we know how much more money is needed and when it must be raised to avoid financial crisis. Actual income and expenses must be reviewed monthly or even weekly in some cases to make sure it conforms to the projection.

We hope that other branches will contribute reports on money raising methods and projects they have found successful.