

New York, N.Y.  
May 13, 1966

TO ALL LOCALS AND BRANCHES:

Dear Comrades,

Enclosed is the latest (and perhaps final) report on the Chicago "Committee for Independent Political Action." An earlier report was sent to the branches in a communication dated March 2, 1966.

The Chicago experience has had parallels elsewhere. Attempts to get "third party" reform movements off the ground as "independent" political opposition to the war have so far met with no success.

Reports from Minneapolis-St. Paul indicate the local CIPA is going through an experience similar to that in Chicago. The Minneapolis committee had at first promoted the candidacy of a controversial radical-pacifist professor, Mulford Sibley, for Congress. When he decided not to run for office, the founders lost interest, though the group has not yet been disbanded.

In New York City, Irving Beinin's call for Independent Political Action (also enclosed with the March 2 letter to all branches) has met little response. Aside from some half-hearted and tentative (though wholeheartedly rejected) proposals that the existing united-front antiwar committee run a candidate this year, little has been done. The Aronowitz-Abrams group now claims it will run an independent candidate for Congress through the West Side CIPA.

A full report on New York developments is in preparation and will be made available to the branches when completed.

Comradely,



Ed Shaw

Enc.

## CHICAGO CIPA REPORT

Following the founding conference of the Committee for Independent Political Action on January 15, the Continuations Committee, a group composed of the original signers of the call plus two representatives from each congressional district, held a series of meetings in late January and February. Twenty-five to forty people attended most of these meetings. Most of the meeting time each week was spent in lengthy organizational discussion. There were area reports in which a representative from each area discussed projected plans (very few of which materialized). There were also lengthy discussions about whether to rent a CIPA office and where, and endless discussion on the choice of an executive secretary. Finally an executive secretary was chosen, as well as a 13-member executive committee which was supposed to be the real functioning body of CIPA.

During all these meetings there was never any serious discussion about CIPA's aims, their political program, or the candidates they wanted to run. There was obviously distrust between the peace and civil-rights organizations, but the basic issues were never talked out.

During the course of these meetings one very grandiose plan of community organizing was projected and approved. This was the establishment of six-week pilot projects in three congressional districts, in which they would pay one person in each area \$80 a week plus \$50 expenses to "organize" the community by canvassing the residents, with this activity culminating in a rally and election of a precinct captain. As far as I know, however, nothing ever developed on these plans, and the money was never raised.

After the executive committee had been chosen and had met twice, a general Continuations Committee meeting was called and the agenda included the following:

- a. Organizational questions, including the decision of the executive committee to close the office; the organization's debts, and a proposal to dissolve the executive committee and abolish the position of executive secretary.
- b. Discussion of the draft "Introductory Information Statement" (attached). This had been drawn up at the previous executive committee meeting.

Attending the April meeting were seven people in addition to myself, none of whom were executive committee members, and only three of whom had played any kind of active role in the organization. At this meeting there was puzzled discussion about what had happened to CIPA. They concluded that there had been a lot of in-fighting, but no one really had any initiative to do anything, and there was no direction from the executive secretary (who was not present). In any case, one of the original signers, Birnbaum, proposed that he contact people to try

( to revitalize the organization, but the rest of the people discussed how they could liquidate the organization and pay the \$300 debt.

Since that time there has been no activity of CIPA. Sy Williams, one of the more vocal members, is now running for office as a Republican. I assume others are talking about supporting Hubbard (Democrat) in the primary race against Dawson.

I understand also that Clark Kissinger and the JOIN (SDS) project are still working in the northside poor Southern white district, doing community organizing around their "felt needs," but nothing political has come of this yet.

So, at this point, this looks like the end of CIPA.

B. Webber  
April 29, 1966

C O P Y

Draft of CIPA Introductory Information Statement

Samuel Bennett  
March 11, 1966

Independent Political Action: Why and For What?

Most Americans have no real political power. The choice between the two parties is a sham. The people that we put into office do not work for what we need and want; they only pretend to listen to us. In fact, all the real political power in this country is in the hands of the Establishment and the political machines it controls and that serve it, and that help keep the rich rich by keeping the poor poor.

Nowhere is this more true than in Chicago, and nobody in Chicago knows these things better than the people who are struggling for human rights, economic justice, and peace. We see that until ordinary people have political power, we will have neither these things nor politicians who are sincerely interested in the welfare of ordinary people.

It is for this reason that the Committee for Independent Political Action was formed. We are a group of people who are concerned with and work for human rights, economic justice, and peace, as well as self-defense and anti-imperialism. We have seen that liberal and reform politicians cannot buck the Establishment -- because they have no constituencies. We have seen that independent candidates running educational campaigns on single issues cannot dent the machine -- because they have no constituencies.

Because of these things, we want to help build an independent constituency -- a political movement that will grow from a concern for many issues, struggle for gains here and now, and organize at the grass roots -- all so that the people of Chicago, of Illinois, and of the United States can again hold political power in their own hands.