

DETROIT REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT RECORDS

BOX 14 OF 16

FOLDER 19

CLP REPORTS IBA BESSIE LOU
CORNETT CASE

Detroit Area - April 1st

We have just begun to reorganize our work in this area around IBA and unite with the necessity of building an independent funding and organizational base for IBA in the working class here. We see a need to accomplish this by beginning to recruit active workers into an ongoing program of IBA locally. Our first step is to rebuild a city-wide baseball league sponsored by IBA. This means recruiting workers to develop the league off their expertise and interest as well as fund it. We see this can give us a broad base in uniting the class by attracting both employed and unemployed. The contradiction that is facing us now is whether or not we are grounded enough in the class that we can consolidate these kinds of organizational leaders off our previous work in the plants and communities quickly enough to have a league underway by May. An internal memo is to go out on Tuesday to try to find these contacts and a letter will go out to our IBA mailing list trying to request funding support for such an endeavor. (Copies of these will be included in our next report)

We have requested promotional materials from Chicago and have as yet not received any. We see the necessity of getting the name and goals out to the class and the party so we lay the correct understanding for building an independent organization and no longer using the IBA as an incorrect front in this area for our work. We have not yet done a division of labor correctly on how this publicity will be developed (i.e. speakers, displays, literature, etc.)

A self-criticism needs to be made on the mechanical way in which I carried out the last assignment given us in writing the enclosed letter to the Black Caucus through Biggs and Conyers. I received the assignment second hand and then carried it out with only checking with Ron G. for a legal interpretation of what we could call for in terms of our legal funding rules and did not therefore have a clear political understanding of what tactics we were lobbying for with the Black Caucus. I happened to bump into Roy in the area for 12 hours and only then pursued a discussion instead of going to district or regional people to clarify tactics before sending this letter. Thus the letter enclosed may reflect some of the errors such a mechanical rendering of a task can produce and may need to be rectified. I'm waiting for clarity on how that should be done and am enclosing the same to district and state as well. (The letter was sent on IBA stationery)

One other problem I need to report is that the box number on our stationary is non-operative when I went down to check on the post office box I was told was ours. I was told it has not been functioning since last Aug. so to lack of payment since last July. This was the first Letha had heard about it and said she had used it up to last Nov. We will struggle to get the number reassigned since Roy said our funding may be jeopardized by a history of this kind of organizational error in the past. We have never received notification of request for payment and will have to check back to see who should have heard from the post office and where the error was made.

We also need to look into our relationship to D.S.C. (unemployed work in the area) and the Workers' Defense Council to see how their work and our work link up to strength and develop us both.

Our Detroit group will be meeting once a month and through no meeting with the organizational bureau of the city once a month at which time we will be turning in our report, a copy of which you will also receive. Looking forward to closer and better political ties with your work in Chicago,
Carolyn

RESOLUTION PRESENTED FOR EXECUTIVE BOARD APPROVAL REGARDING WEU
SUPPORT FOR BESSIE LOU CORNETT. Proposed by Josh Lerner

Passed

1. The Welfare Employees Union stands on the side of the workers of Harlan County Kentucky in their struggle for good working conditions, safe working conditions, union representation, equal rights and the end of terror and violence against them.
2. We are outraged at the continued attacks aimed at Bessie Lou Cornett and other workers by the Ku Klux Klan and their associates in government.
3. We are appalled by the attempts of the KKK first to have Bessie Lou Cornett convicted for kidnapping and now at their public decision to TAR and FEATHER her and drive her out of Harlan.
4. We stand fully behind the attempt to create unity among Black and white, employed and unemployed in Harlan and elsewhere which has brought about these attacks by the KKK and mine owners.

Be it resolved that we send telegrams to Governor Julian Carrol, Rep. Tim Lee Carter, the Sheriff of Harlan County and the Harlan Labor News expressing these feelings and demanding the protection of Bessie Lou and the outlawing of the KKK;

Be it further resolved that we send copies of this resolution to the above named individuals and organizations and the Congressional Black Caucus urging support of Bessie Lou.

Be it further resolved that we put out a press release putting forward the spirit of this resolution to inform others of what is happening and the welfare employees position on it.

Be it further resolved that we put out a flyer to all workers on the situation urging them to send telegrams and write letters demanding Bessie's safety and the protection of her civil liberties.

Theresa

I am now in the process of writing the telegram, the press release and the Flyer. Will get copies to you as soon as possible

GLOTTA, ADELMAN & DINGES
1529 BROADWAY, SUITE 410 - DETROIT, MICHIGAN 48226

M E S S A G E

R E P L Y

TO Sam W. Thomas
Attorney at Law
1000 Detroit Bank & Trust Bldg.
Detroit, Michigan

DATE

DATE 6/9/75

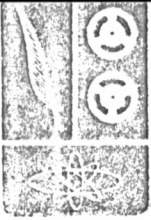
Dear Mr. Thomas:

Enclosed please tickets and
some invitations regarding the cocktail
party being sponsored by International
Black Appeal for Lynda Ann Ewen.

SIGNED

Ronald D. Glotta

SIGNED



Office and Professional Employees
INTERNATIONAL UNION LOCAL 42 AFL-CIO

3000 EAST GRAND BOULEVARD
MABEL HOLLERAN, President

DETROIT, MICHIGAN 48202

Telephone 874-1340

JOHN P. HARRINGTON, Secretary-Treasurer

April 7, 1976

Mayor Nicely Hazen
City Hall
Cumberland, Kentucky 40823

Sheriff Billy G. Williams
Harlan County Courthouse
Harlan, Kentucky 40831

Representative Ken Heckler
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear Sirs:

We, the membership of Office and Professional Employees International Union, Local 42, AFL-CIO, Detroit, Michigan, are outraged by the recent K. K. K. decision to tar and feather Bessie Lou Cornett.

We demand full protection for this staunch working people's fighter.

We demand that the K. K. K. be stopped.

Local 42 membership wants you to "Keep Bessie in Harlan!"

Sincerely,

Irene Christie

Irene Christie
Acting Recording Secretary

IC/md ✓
opeiu42afl-cio

cc: Local 42 Executive Board Members

Unit Report March 26th CL.

IBA Work

Uniform

Letters were sent to Diggs and Conyers requesting immediate investigation of the threat by the Klan to Bessie Lou Cornett's life. They were asked to rally the Black Caucus around giving this attack to the life of a worker fighting for the unity of black and white workers around their basic economic ~~and~~ needs both at work and in the community--national publicity as a way of assuring protection for her life and defense of all freedom loving people.. I spoke of Tim Lee Corcoran call for an FBI investigation and united with that but perhaps that will turn into it's opposite around the work of the CLP in that area. This must be analyzed as to whether that was a political error. The IBA post office box upon investigation has not been operating since last Aug. because the bill has not been paid since last July so all mail on our stationary with P.O. Box # has been no good for return. This will be rectified by running new letter head and envelopes will have to be reordered..

The decision was made to look into operating an IBA baseball league trying to build off the old successful leagues that IBA once operated using factory workers groups as the base. A meeting is set with General to see what contacts are left as well as a meeting with the industrial commission to see if this is a possibility still this year. k The parks and recreation dept are open to registering us at diamonds but we would get last pick of available space since previous teams get priority. This setting up of teams can only be done if comrades have enough contacts with the interest and skills to organize such since with the priority campaign going no comrades seemingly in factory units can be expected to give time to this. We see this politically as a base of grounding our factory nuclei in one more working class organization and building a base for our long range goal of fighting for dues check off for IBA in at least one plant this fall if not more.

Around dues check off John Williams has been contacted in Chicago for history of this struggle and research already completed around United Fund etc so that we can give comrades in factories this history to begin the campaign for dues check off by exposure of the present United Fund and other groups that take workers' money. John is to be in Detroit this week-end, hopefully.

LAW OFFICES OF
GLOTTA, DINGES, DAVIS AND MIDDLETON, P. C.
FOURTH FLOOR, HARTZ BUILDING / 1529 BROADWAY / DETROIT, MICHIGAN 48226
313/964-1190

Copy

June 9, 1975

HUGH M. DAVIS
ROBERT J. DINGES
RONALD D. GLOTTA
DIANE L. MIDDLETON
IVY THOMAS RILEY

MICHAEL ADELMAN
OF COUNSEL

Mr. Richard A. Bockoff
Attorney at Law
1970 First National Building
Detroit, Michigan 48226

Dear Dick:

Per our telephone conversation of today, enclosed please find three tickets for the Cocktail Party honoring Lynda Ann Ewen on behalf of International Black Appeal.

See you at the cocktail.

Sincerely,

GLOTTA, ADELMAN, DINGES,
DAVIS, MIDDLETON, & RILEY



Ronald D. Glotta

RDG/ftm

Enclosures

Memo

TO: RG & BD

From Dick Lobenthal

subject: Myzell Sowell, and IBA

Date: 10/16/75

Myzell Sowell and I had a 9:30 a.m. appointment, today; I left after waiting in the outer office until about 9:43. (I flunked "waiting room" in college.) Seriously, unfortunately, I, like everyone else these days ~~am~~ am on an incredibly tight schedule, and I just didn't have a whole lot of time. It's conceivable that next week I might have some more, ~~xxxxxxx~~ (time) but that's pushing our schedule, re JoAnne Little.

Ideally, what we want from Sowell is his taking the primary responsibility for a \$20 per head cocktail party to be held, Friday, November 7, 4:30-7:00 somewhere in the downtown area, principal invitees being lawyers. Hopefully it could be multi-sponsored: IBA, Defenders Ofc, Wolverine Bar, Lawyers Guild, etc. etc....with the sole fiscal beneficiary, all proceeds, to IBA. We, of course would be doing whatever we can to help, and assist him as he needs. He might not be willing to do that, but rather assist us...that being my (at least) last choice.

Buck has already talked with him and he's interested and willing to help; unfortunately I was not able to ~~fix~~ firm it up this morning, as I had ~~hoped~~ hoped. Ergo can one of you get with him, and see what's what...

Secondly, Letha and Ron talked and felt that Myzell ought be one of the chairpersons for our cocktail party on Sunday November 9. Initially, I thought that was O.K., but now I'm having second thoughts. If Myzell pulls together the Friday bit, ~~ix~~ his name is sufficiently recognized in the legal community that it ought be used for the Friday thing; if he's also a chairperson for the Sunday thing, I think it would be confusing to persons who would get invitations to both, and for those outside the legal community who would get an invitation to Sunday, his name is probably not so well known.

Please let me have your thinking on this...and let me know how you make out relative to paragraph 2, above.

Thanks-regards

D

March 25, 1976

Congressman Charles Diggs
2208 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington D.C., 20515

Dear Congressman:

We want to bring to your attention an urgent need for national attention to be drawn to the life of Bessie Lou Cornett which has been threatened by the Ku Klux Klan in Harlan County, Kentucky. International Black Appeal set up a defense fund due to an alleged kidnapping of the wife, children and neighbor of a head Ku Klux Klan member in Harlan. Due to the result of national pressure and investigation that resulted by the F.B.I. the woman who accused Bessie was charged with "knowingly and willingly making a false and fictitious statement to a material fact regarding a kidnapping" which is a felony crime under the jurisdiction of the F.B.I. Although legal methods are still being taken against her by the Klan we have evidence that the Ku Klux Klan has voted to "tar and feather" her the first opportunity they get.

Again we must rally national attention and outrage that this organization can be allowed to intimidate and threaten the lives of anyone who is trying to better working and living conditions in the coal fields of Appalachia, and in the neighborhoods for better housing and decent education and in the struggle for the equality of Black people. We bring her appeal to you: "I don't want to die, but I won't be intimidated. I won't let the Ku Klux Klan terrorize Harlan County." Because of your influential role in the Black Caucus we feel that you are able to demand the necessary investigation that will bring national attention to Harlan County and prevent such an act of violence not only against one worker but against all freedom fighting people.

Nor do we see such an event unrelated to the interest of your constituents here in Detroit because of the crosses that have been burned in our neighborhoods this past fall in northeast Detroit. One family received a letter from the Imperial Wizard of the United Klans of America threatening them due to their desire to move into a new neighborhood. The Klan must be stopped wherever it appears.

We have received the good work that already Representative Tim Lee Carter of the 88th District has begun the demand for an F.B.I. investigation. We trust you will rally the Black Caucus as well to make such a demand. We are also asking Congressman John Conyers Jr. to assist.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Lewis
I.B.A., Staff Director Detroit

Report from

Bessie Lou Cornett Defense Committee

to D.F.T.



Does the Ku Klux Klan still exist? Many people believe that the KKK is relegated to history books. The time of men in hooded white capes terrorizing Blacks has long been past.

This is not true! The Klan in Harlan, Kentucky has voted to tar and feather Bessie Lou Cornett. Bessie Lou, born and raised in Harlan, has been fighting all her life for better working and living conditions in the coal fields of Appalachia, in the neighborhoods for better housing and decent education and in the struggle for the equality of Blacks.

The KKK wants Bessie Lou Cornett dead, because Bessie and the people of Harlan work against the tyranny of the coal operators and the violence of the Ku Klux Klan. For years the KKK has rampaged across the country lynching Blacks, murdering civil rights workers, tarring and feathering union organizers, bombing and shooting progressive people.

It's hard to believe that people can still be killed for union organizing. We become outraged when teachers are fired and/or jailed for striking. It might seem impossible but coal operators offer less, risk more people's lives and are even harder to bargain with than most boards of education.

If we allow the Klan to kill Bessie Lou Cornett who will be next? When times get hard and workers begin to lose a lot of the gains made over the years, teachers are one of the first groups hit. This is already happening in the form of roll-backs in contracts, jailing for strikers, firings as in Crestwood.

Only we as workers and other progressive people can stop the KKK and other fascist attacks. When Bessie Lou Cornett was arrested last summer for allegedly kidnapping the wife of a local Klan leader in Harlan the people all over the country came to her defense. Telegrams, resolutions, letters of protest flooded into Harlan and eventually Bessie was freed and cleared of all charges.

We must follow Bessie Lou Cornett's own words "I don't want to die, but I won't be intimidated. I won't let the Ku Klux Klan terrorize Harlan County." Vote in favor of the resolution in support of Bessie Lou Cornett. Write letters, send telegrams, pass resolutions in our PIA's, block clubs, social clubs to demand protection for Bessie and demand that the Klan be stopped.

KEEP BESSIE LOU IN HARIAN!

SMASH THE KKK AND OTHER FASCIST GANGS!

What Is The International Black Appeal?

The purpose of IBA is to raise funds as a non-profit, tax-exempt public organization for charitable, religious, scientific, literary and educational purposes. Today, as we see the economic crisis deepening, it is becoming absolutely essential that working people, both employed and unemployed, develop an independent funding base. Our major focus is on the plight of black and other minority people in particular with a view of helping all working people in general.

Last year we were able to raise \$6905 for the defense of Bessie Lou Cornett, a staff member of the **Harlan Labor News** of Harlan, Ky. and a leader of the miners' struggles for better working conditions. She had been accused of allegedly kidnapping the wife of the head of the Ku Klux Klan in that area.

This year we want to greatly expand the contributions so that we may raise our grants to at least 75%. You should be looking forward to hearing more and

more about the International Black Appeal through our newsletter, other organizations and our various programs.

We need your help to build the International Black Appeal. Please send your contribution now.



IBA
Hartz Building
1529 Broadway Suite 4
Detroit, Michigan 48226

BESSIE LOU CORNETT DEFENSE

RESOLUTION

Whereas Bessie Lou Cornett has been a long time fighter for unions and a decent life for all working people,

Whereas she has fought consistently for better working and living conditions in the coal fields of Appalachia and in neighborhoods for better housing and education, as well as for equality for blacks;

And Whereas, Bessie has been the spokeswoman for the workers of Harlan, Kentucky, and her slogan has always been unity and organization;

And whereas, the Ku Klux Klan has vowed to tar and feather her and drive her out of Harlan for her support of black and white unity, unions, and anti-Klan activities,

Therefore, be it resolved that

The Detroit Federation of Teachers, Local 231, AFL-CIO, demands that the Klan be stopped and that Bessie be protected in the interests of working people throughout the country,

And be it further resolved that the Detroit Federation of Teachers will send copies of this resolution this week to:

Governor Julian Carroll
Governor's Mansion
Frankfort, Kentucky 40601

Sheriff Billy B. Williams
Harlan County Courthouse
Harlan, Kentucky 40831

Representative Tim Lee Carter
88th District
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

as well as to President Ford
and Michigan Congressmen



Threatened Again