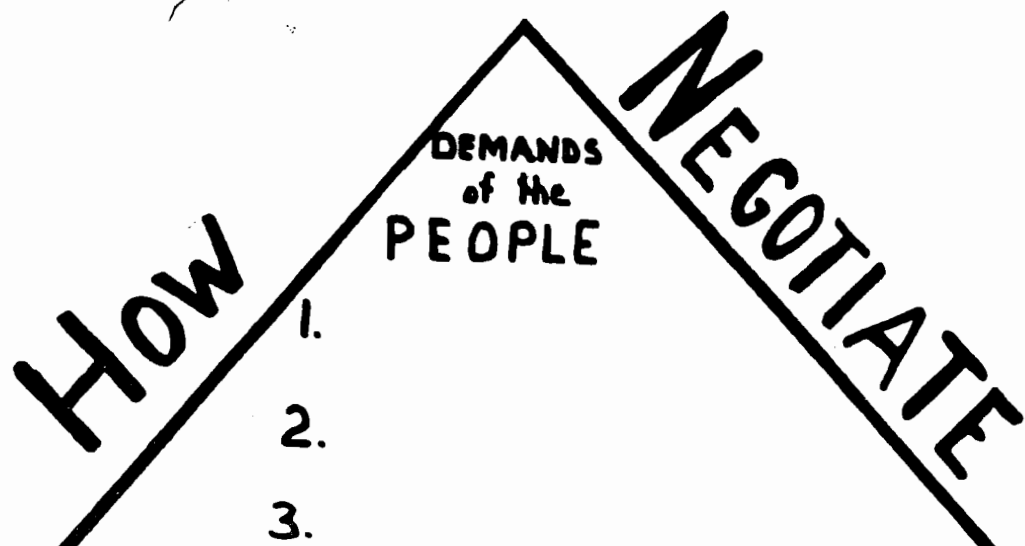


To



Agreement Between

Signed: _____
For the People

For the Power Structure

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THE ORGANIZER'S LIBRARY SERIES
of the
SOUTHERN CONFERENCE EDUCATIONAL FUND
3210 West Broadway
Louisville, Kentucky 40211

(Bulk Rates to Movement Groups)

HOW TO NEGOTIATE

You got to talk when the spirit says talk,
You got to talk when the spirit says talk
Oh when the spirit says talk,
You got to talk, oh Lord,
You got to talk when the spirit says talk.

—Civil Rights Song

WHY TALK?

Action groups get tired of meeting and talking all the time. They want action. But there are some good reasons for a formal talk with your opponents—which is called negotiating.

GET THE RIGHT MAN

The most important reason to sit down with your opponents is to make sure they are your opponents. Many times groups get all stirred up about some issue and they begin swinging away at the wrong enemy. This happens because the real enemy is usually smart enough to set up a smoke screen. He sits back and chuckles while people who should be allies in the fight against him, fight against each other. This is what the Southern politicians and landowners have done with the Negroes and the poor white people.

To find out whether he is really the enemy, go over your demands as clearly and simply as possible to the man. Can he meet the demands, if he really wanted to? If not, find out who can. He is your man.

HOW MUCH POWER ON EACH SIDE?

When you are sure that he is the right man, the next thing to do is to be sure each of you understands the other one's power. Many fights could be avoided if people had checked beforehand to see which side was the strongest.

USE NEGOTIATIONS TO STRENGTHEN YOUR GROUP

Another reason to negotiate is to get your group together. If the group is still not together for a big push, sometimes a meeting with its opponents is a good way to get it turned on. If this is the purpose, try to get as many of the group as possible to the negotiation scene. Let everybody see what they are up against. And let your opponent see what he's up against.

THREE DON'TS

DON'T NEGOTIATE FOR SOMEONE ELSE

If the problem is not yours, don't talk for someone else. For too long, poor people have had do-gooders negotiating for them. This is one of the main reasons why we are still poor. As an organizer, it is your job to teach the group how to negotiate for its demands—not do it for them.

DON'T NEGOTIATE IF YOU ARE NOT PREPARED TO ACT

If you are not willing to take action if your negotiations breakdown, then don't negotiate.

DON'T NEGOTIATE IF YOU ARE NOT WILLING TO DO THE HARD WORK

And if all you want is the glory of winning an argument, but not the hard work of organizing a strike, a sit-in or a demonstration, then don't negotiate.

Summarizing

Why Talk...

1. to get the right man.
2. to check each other's power.
3. to make threat believable.
4. to strengthen group.
5. to fight about important things.
6. to gain public support.

But Don't Talk...

1. for someone else.
2. if you're not ready to take action.
3. if you don't want to do the hard work of organizing direct action.

MAKE YOUR THREATS BELIEVABLE

The fourth reason for talking with your opponent is to get across to him as clearly as possible what will happen if he does not come through on your demands. This is called making your threat believable. People act quickly when they are truly threatened. When they think you are just bluffing, they will bluff back. Spell it out slowly and carefully to them.

A good example of a believable threat was when some Japanese railroad workers, who were striking for better pay, chained themselves to the tracks in front of a long freight train. They had some friends put padlocks on the chains which were wrapped around their bodies and the tracks. Then their friends threw the keys into a nearby river. All this was done in full view of the fink engineers who had broken the strike and were going to drive the trains for the bosses.

This threat to stop the trains was made quite believable. The trains did not go. And the workers got their raises.

You can make your threats just as believable if you go over them in a straightforward and reasonable manner with your opponent.

FIGHT ABOUT THE IMPORTANT THINGS

You should also sit down with your opponent to be sure you are fighting about the important things. You may have the right man, but be fighting about the wrong problem.

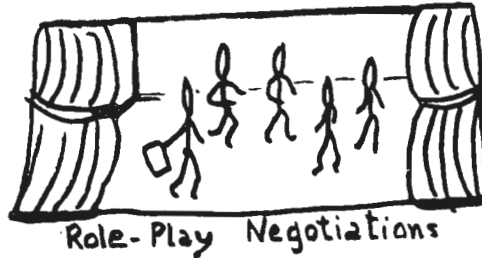
For example, you might meet with the Chief of Police in your town or precinct to demand that his men stop using the word "boy" or "hillbilly" or "broad." You may find that the Chief has already issued an order against the use of such words, but his men are not following his order. After he shows you his written order, perhaps you could get him to give you a copy of it, so that it could be well-publicized through the community.

The Chief is probably the right man, but you shouldn't be fighting with him about issuing an order. Instead, the problem is getting the order enforced.

WELL-PUBLICIZED NEGOTIATIONS GAIN PUBLIC SUPPORT

The last reason for negotiating is to gain public support. Most people will sympathize with direct action tactics more readily if you have built up a case for them. So, if you can say in your community and larger newspapers that you tried to sit down and talk over your demands, people will be more likely to support you in a campaign of non-cooperation or whatever other direct action tactic you decide upon.

After you have played it through a couple of times, you can hold elections on who would be the best people to make up the negotiating team. You also should pick the "captain" of the team.



4. Always select a negotiating team. This gives you more room to maneuver. For example, in the middle of the negotiations, your opponent might ask you if you would be willing to accept a compromise solution—offering you "half a loaf." Since you don't want to refuse him flatly (he may be feeling out your strength), you might say, "Well, that's an interesting suggestion. If you would write out what you had in mind, we'll take it back to the organization and see how everybody feels about it."

5. Never underestimate your opponent. If he is a businessman or a big gun in an agency, he probably got there because of his ability to negotiate. When he starts slinging big words around, ask him to break it down. Will he meet your demands? If not, what, specifically, is his position? You need to know, so you can tell the group. They have sent you to find out what his position is.

Everytime he tries to throw you off the track, just ask him very slowly, "What will you do about our demands?"



A good example of this simple questioning technique was in a small rural community which was about to lose its neighborhood health clinic. The County Health Department sent a man down to the community center to try to explain why the clinic had been removed without telling a soul in the community. It was a large turnout, and the Health Department man explained and explained. Finally he said, "Are there any questions?"

HOW TO PREPARE FOR NEGOTIATIONS

1. Always write your demands. Make them simple and clear. Be sure everyone in the group understands them. This will make it easier for the negotiating team to get them across to the opponent, too.

2. Always get the opponent's position in writing. Ask him to write out and sign any promise that he makes. Sometimes they will say they agree with your demands, but nothing is ever said about when and how they will carry their "agreement" out. Don't leave until this is made clear—and you have it in writing. Also, ask him to sign a copy of the demands you take, because later on he may claim he never talked with you and never heard what you wanted.

If you remember the importance of putting it in writing, you are on your way. You can always change a few words, but never change the meaning of your demands.



3. Always role play a negotiation scene beforehand. Get a couple of guys to play the part of the opponents. Two or three other people can play the part of the negotiating team. Then switch sides. Those that were on the negotiating team play the part of the opponents, and vice versa.

It might go something like this:

OPPONENTS: (In a low voice) Come in, come in. I haven't got all day.

NEGOTIATING TEAM MEMBER: Thank you. This is Charles Smith, Roy Hobbs, and Sue Mulloy. We'd like to talk with you about several problems.

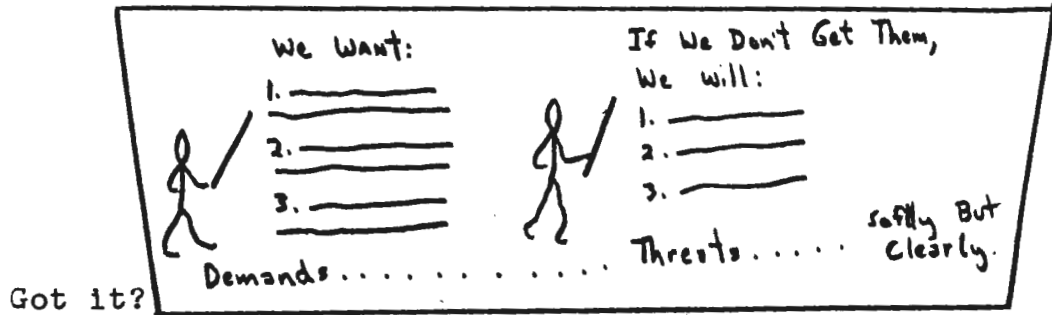
OPPONENTS: (Deciding to be friendly.) Why of course. I'm always glad to sit down with people that have problems.

NEGOTIATING TEAM MEMBER: We represent a union of 2,000 people who want the following things (handing the OPPONENTS copies of the demands).

...and so forth.

Remember when the Health Department man came to the commu center? What can you learn from this?

9. Make your demands and threats softly but clearly. Make your demands and threats softly and clearly. Make your demands and threats softly and clearly.



Got it? OK. Let's see you teach it to some of the people in the group you have helped to organize.

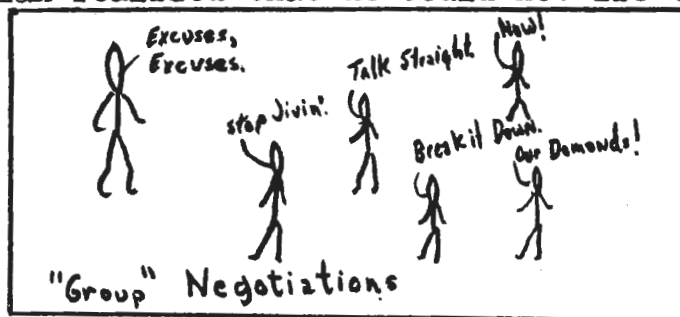
The Sample Letter and Sample Negotiation Agreement on the next two pages may give you some added ideas.

A woman in the back of the room stood up and said slowly, "Why are you taking the clinic?"

The Health Department man explained for about ten more minutes. Then he asked if there were any other questions.

Then a man stood up and said very slowly, "Why are you taking the clinic?"

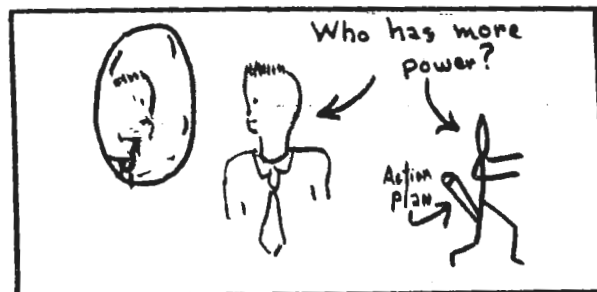
This game went on for about an hour before the Health Department man realized that he could not lie to this group.



6. Be sure to make it clear to your opponent what will happen if he does not meet your demands. Know what your strength is before you negotiate. And spell out what you plan to do if the negotiations break down.

7. Be sure you have an action plan before you negotiate. If you do not have an action plan in your pocket when you go to negotiate, you are just bluffing. And most of your opponents will call your bluff.

A negotiating team of four people which is trying to get an agency of 500 people to change its ways has to have something to back it up. You are not going to change some old-line agency, business or government official with your good looks. Or with sweet talk.



8. If at all possible, try to meet your opponent on your own grounds. Or at least on neutral territory. Every time you have to go to him, sit in his office, wait for him to answer his phone, it puts you at a psychological disadvantage.

THE POOR PEOPLES' UNION
Mountainvale, Kentucky

Governor Edward Brown
Kentucky State Capitol
Frankfort, Ky.

April-18, 1967

Dear Gov. Brown,

Last month a negotiating team from the Poor Peoples' Union met with your assistant to discuss three specific projects we would like to see undertaken in our County. We had hoped to meet with you, but we were told you were too busy.

Since your assistant did not understand our demands, we have talked with leaders of several other organizations of the poor in Eastern Kentucky. They have agreed to affiliate with the Poor Peoples' Union and join with us in our demands.

Representatives from these six organizations and the Poor Peoples' Union would like to meet with you within seven days, so we may find out what your position is.

Sincerely,

Mary Lou Jones
Mary Lou Jones, President
THE POOR PEOPLES' UNION

Walter Wilhelm
Walter Wilhelm, President
Eastern Kentucky Association

Jake McKee
Jake McKee
Unemployed Fathers' Union

Jim Martin
Jim Martin
Lonesome Creek Association

Kathy Greene
Kathy Greene
United Teens Council

Ed Boone
Ed Boone
Council of Retired
Miners

Martha Clarke
Martha Clarke
Mothers' Union

AN AGREEMENT

between

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF THE BIG TOWN

and

THE CITY-WIDE UNION OF NEIGHBORHOOD CLUBS

Date: _____

The School Board agrees to:

1. Terminate Mr. James Foster and Mr. Cecil Atkins from the Kangaroo School Administration Staff.
2. Reinstate all students and former students who were expelled by Mr. Foster and Mr. Atkins to Kangaroo School or another school of their choice.
3. Reinstate and suspend all punishment of those young people who have participated in the student protest movement sponsored by the City-Wide Union of Neighborhood Clubs.
4. Recognize an official Student Personnel Review Board at each Junior and Senior High School. This Board would consist of five (5) students to be elected each Spring at each Junior and Senior High School

Each SPR Board would review every present teacher, every potential teacher appointee for the next school year and every person being considered for promotion in the school. The School Board will not proceed on any personnel changes before reviewing the comments and recommendations of the SPR Board.

The City-Wide Union of Neighborhood Clubs agrees to:

1. Withdraw student strike and get all students back in school on _____ (date).
2. Organize and supervise elections of SPR Boards in each Junior and Senior High School each Spring.
3. Maintain regular contact with the Superintendent of School on these and other problems.

Signed: _____

For the School Board

For the CWUNC