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AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

Preserving American Jewish History

MS-603: Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum Collection, 1945-1992.

Series E: General Alphabetical Files. 1960-1992

Box 80, Folder 4, Black manifesto and Interreligious Foundation
for Community Organization, 1969.

ON STRIKE: UNION SEMINARY FOR THE BLACK MANIFESTO

On May 11, 1969, several students of Union Theological Seminary presented President John C. Bennett with a list of three demands growing from their commitment to the recent Black Manifesto adopted by the National Black Economic Development Conference. These demands were:

- I. A COMMITMENT BY UNION SEMINARY TO SUPPORT THE BLACK MANIFESTO.
- II. AN IMMEDIATE, OPEN MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS TO ENACT THE FOLLOWING:
 - A. A COMMITMENT OF \$100,000 BY UNION SEMINARY TO THE INTERRELIGIOUS FOUNDATION FOR COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION (IFCO) FOR THE NEXT FISCAL YEAR.
 - B. A COMMITMENT OF \$1,000,000 TO BE CONTRIBUTED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE SEMINARY, PAYABLE TO IFCO
- III. AN ALL DAY TEACH-IN ON MAY 12 TO DISCUSS THE BLACK MANIFESTO.

President Bennett said that he could not act on the first two demands and would not take initiative on the third. As a result, a large number of our fellow students joined us in taking over the administration building and the classroom building. We will hold these buildings until there is a positive response on the part of the Board of Directors.

We believe that the white religious institutions of this country have contributed to the systematic efforts to keep Black people from exercising control over their own destinies. We believe Black people must have complete control over economic and political institutions which determine their development. We believe that white churches and church agencies should recognize their past role as being a block to enabling people to deal honestly and directly with their world.

If the Gospel is to have any relevance to us today, it is our conviction that words and ideals must be accompanied by commitment and action. Therefore we are taking this step in an attempt to call our own community and the other institutions to which we are allied to a firm and positive and concrete support of the Black Manifesto.

SUPPORT THE BLACK MANIFESTO

A STATEMENT

The Black Caucus of Union Theological Seminary

On April 26, the National Black Economic Conference, sponsored by the Inter-religious Foundation for Community Organization (IFCO) was presented with a demand of \$500,000,000.00. This sum was demanded of Christian churches and Jewish synagogues as "reparations" for the history of injustices which the black man in America has been forced to endure. Since the Detroit meeting, the sum as outlined in the Black Manifesto has been endorsed by several important groups, including the National Committee of Black Churchmen and the Black Caucus of the IFCO Board of Directors. Having carefully reviewed the Manifesto and many of the subsequent reactions to it, we, the students of the Union Theological Black Caucus, add our firm endorsement of the \$500,000,000.00 demand. Indeed, we feel that every effort should be made to solicit these funds from all churches and church-related institutions immediately.

As students of theology, we interpret the gospel as a radical message of a divinely inspired prophet designed to relieve the oppressed and the outcasts of their burden of poverty and scorn. We believe that the church as the extension of the body of Christ must itself undergo crucifixion as it seeks to renew life and expose men to the things which make for peace. We believe that the church is under a divine imperative to respond dramatically to the cries of those who suffer, and so be an agent of change and social progress. Yet, we painfully recognize that the church has continuously reaffirmed the spirit without a proportionate reaffirmation of the deed. Still worse, we see all too many instances where the church as an institution has reaped great benefits, while the poor and rejected have received nothing. As students of theology, we must expose this hypocrisy and begin to reconcile thought and action - word and deed.

As future leaders of the church, we must take seriously the historical injustices and contradictions of the church which continue to suppress rather than liberate. We believe that unlike our forebears we can not exclude for our Seminary training vital moral questions which demand immediate action. We believe that radical questioning of traditional inequities must be recognized and dealt with now. This is especially true since we participate, as students, in an elitist system which silently tolerates violent oppression.

As black students in particular, we can not ignore the long-lived struggle for justice and dignity which our brothers and sisters of the ghetto must wage daily without recourse. We, as black students, feel that a failure to respond to the call for a United Black appeal would be irresponsible and unpardonable. We recognize that Union Theological Seminary is, in fact, in Harlem, but is strangely covered with ivy which Harlem seldom sees. We the Black Caucus recognize the extent to which the Black Manifesto is a clear call for a vast redistribution of power and wealth in America. We can not but do all within our power to bring peace and power to our brothers with the ultimate hope that peace might be brought to the world and hope for the third world. Our action is the humble beginning of support for a demand quite legitimate but by far far too modest.

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

Institute of Human Relations • 165 East 56 Street, New York, N. Y. 10022 • PLaza 1-4000 • Cable Wishcom,

May 7, 1969

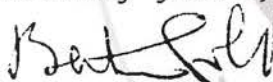
Reverend Lucius Walker
Executive Director
Interreligious Foundation for
Community Organization
475 Riverside Drive
New York, N. Y. 10027

Dear Rev. Walker:

In view of today's New York Times report of your press conference, I am writing to inform you that the matter of our relationship to IFCO is being brought for review to our governing board.

As you must know, we cannot support the ideological principles and the specific tactics contained in the "black manifesto".

Sincerely yours,



Bertram H. Gold
Executive Vice President

BHG/gk

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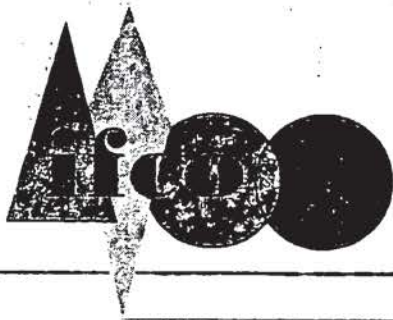
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the
interreligious foundation for community organization,

211 east 43rd street • new york city 10017 • (212) 986-5727

Lucius Walker, Jr.
executive director

May 16, 1969

Bertram H. Gold, Executive Vice President
The American Jewish Committee
Institute of Human Relations
165 East 56 Street
New York, New York 10022

Dear Mr. Gold:

In preparation for your governing Board's review of its relationship to IFCO in light of the May 7, 1969 New York Times' report of a telephone conversation with me, I am available for a more accurate and detailed discussion of both IFCO's and my point of view than was carried in that article. Indeed, in the interest of understanding, which is so necessary at this time, I request an appointment at the earliest possible date.

You must know from your IFCO Board representatives and the newspapers that IFCO did not "support the ideological principles and the specific tactics". We have stated that tactics are not the business of IFCO but of the National Black Economic Development Conference. Nor did we condemn the language of the manifesto. We endorsed the program.

Obviously, the "responsibility" for the hard language which all of us who are concerned about the welfare of Black and poor Americans are driven to - must in part be shared by religious institutions for their lack of appropriate and adequate retribution for their participation in the ravages of racism. For example, over a two year period the American Jewish Committee has seen fit to contribute only \$3,000 to IFCO. No additional support has come from other Jewish sources. To withdraw from IFCO because we pledge our meager help to people who have a case against the inhuman indifference of their fellow man would only add to the proof that others do not care and mitigate again IFCO's efforts to win viable change without violence.

Sincerely,

Lucius Walker, Jr.
Lucius Walker, Jr.

LW/ad

Enc. 1

DRAFT

Dear Lu,

The events that have taken place since the convening of the National Black Economic Development Conference in Detroit, the issuance of the Black Manifesto by Mr. James Forman at that conference, the public association of IFCO with "the principles and programs" of that manifesto, and the tactics designed to intimidate churches and synagogues have created a serious crisis of conscience for me in my role as President of IFCO.

When the Protestant leaders who organized IFCO in 1966 first invited me to serve as President, I did so because the essential purposes as then set forth were ideologically and programmatically acceptable to me. I believed then that IFCO represented a unique opportunity to serve on an interfaith basis the cause of effective social change through reform of our system by democratic means.

During the past two years, I have had the conviction that IFCO has made progress and has emerged as a vehicle of great potential service. The turn of events around the Black Manifesto has changed the situation drastically for IFCO, as I see it, and therefore for me. The Black Manifesto is a clear call for "the use of force and power of the gun" to "bring this government down," for "armed confrontation and long years of sustained guerilla warfare inside this country," for "an armed, well-disciplined, black controlled government," for a revolutionary seizure of state power by violence and terror.

It is one thing for Mr. Forman to preach and organize revolution. It is an altogether different matter when IFCO becomes daily and publicly implicated in support of his policies and programs, and no effort is made by IFCO's Board or its staff to disassociate itself from that ideological position or to repudiate his tactics of intimidation.

In a statement that I submitted to the white caucus of IFCO's Board on May 6th, I made clear that I cannot in conscience stand by in silence and appear as President of IFCO to give assent to the revolutionary ideology and racist rhetoric of the Black Manifesto, nor to Mr. Forman's program for disruption of churches and synagogues. The Board saw fit in its wisdom not to take clearcut positions on both these questions, nor have IFCO public statements since then had any effect other than affirm that we are involved in an active relationship with the author of the Manifesto.

Under the circumstances, I have no alternative but to submit my resignation as President of IFCO, and ask that it become effective immediately. I will continue to be committed to the original purposes of IFCO, and hope to find appropriate ways to help advance those objectives.

Sincerely,

RESOLUTION ON INTERX IFCO

joined
The involvement of the American Jewish Committee in the founding of the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization (IFCO). In response to initiatives taken by Protestant and Catholic leadership, *This decision grew* out of *our* *long-standing* ~~long and well-established~~ commitment ~~of the AJC~~ to ~~play~~ play a responsible role in helping to bring about effective social change ~~through reform~~ within the democratic process. During the two years of its activity, IFCO *has* made steady progress in helping advance social justice for the poor and deprived in our nation's slums and ~~and~~ rural areas by providing support *for programs of* ~~for constructive programs of~~ community organization, leadership training, and economic development. While our financial ~~resources~~ *have* resources invested in IFCO ~~had~~ been modest, we ~~have~~ ~~been~~ ~~heartened~~ were ~~heartened~~ by its ~~steadfast~~ ~~program~~ heartened by the role that members of our staff and our lay constituency in various parts of the country played in *helping* ~~contributing to its steady progress in building~~ an authentic coalition of ghetto community representatives in alliance with major religious and social action bodies.

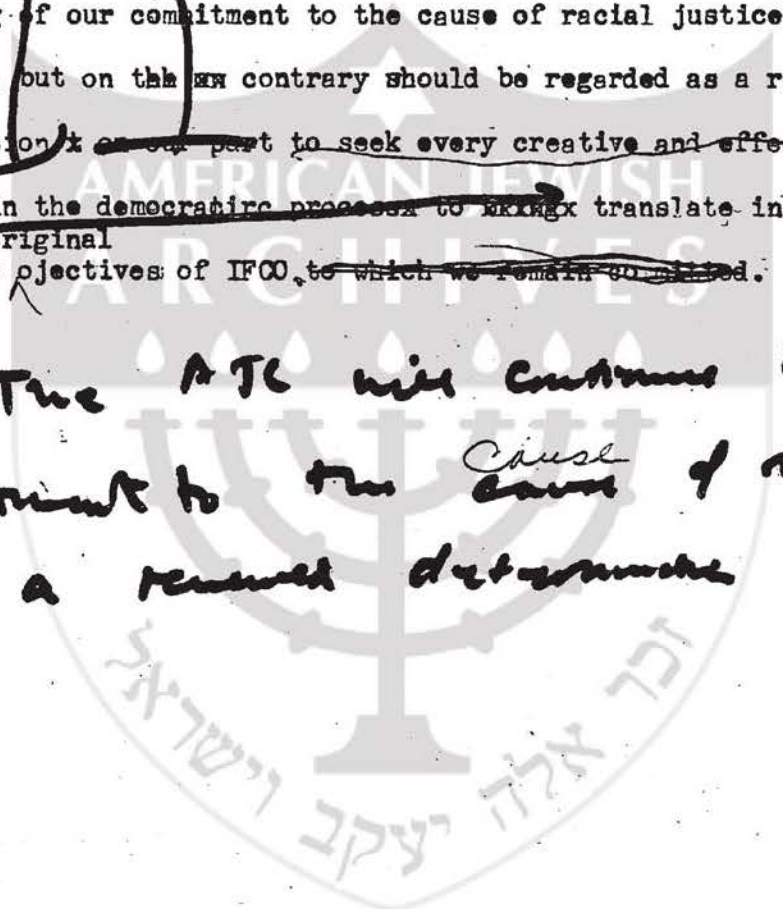
It is therefore ~~with~~ ~~keen~~ ~~regret~~ that we view the events of recent weeks which have resulted in widespread confusion regarding the ~~ideological~~ present status of IFCO. The identification of IFCO ~~concerned~~ in statements and actions with the Black Manifesto and its spokesmen ~~and~~ *advocacy* have become the source of deepest concern to our organization. The ~~preaching~~ of ~~governmental~~ ~~terror~~ and violence ~~stands~~ as elaborated throughout the manifesto is in flagrant contradiction to the original purposes of IFCO which were the terms on which ~~we~~ *the* the AJC accepted ~~an~~ invitation ~~to~~ to join. (Having ~~asked~~ for a repudiation of the revolutionary ideology and racist rhetoric contained in the manifesto, and having called for a repudiation of the tactic of disrupting churches and synagogues, and finding that these have not been forthcoming from appropriate authorities who constitute IFCO.)

Since IFCO has not dissociated itself from the ~~principles of the Manifesto, and the tactics set forth~~
~~therein,~~

as a matter of conscience we find ourselves reluctantly compelled
to withdraw ^{as an organizational} membership from IFCO (~~until such time as firm and~~
~~unambiguous clarification of its relationship to the entire Black Manifesto~~
~~ideology and tactics is made public).~~

This decision to withdraw, ~~should in no way be construed as~~
a weakening of our commitment to the cause of racial justice in
our nation, but on the ~~ex~~ contrary should be regarded as a renewed
determination ~~on our part to seek every creative and effective~~
~~means within the democratic process to bring~~ translate into
original reality the objectives of IFCO, to which we remain committed.

The AJC will continue its
commitment to the ^{cause} of racial justice,
with a renewed determination to help.



INTERRELIGIOUS FOUNDATION FOR COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION
Special Meeting - Board of Directors
May 6, 1969

The meeting began with the introduction of Mr. Jess Sixkiller, moderator of the IFCO Indian American Task Force. He presented the following statement:

On May 2-3, 1969, Mr. Lucius Walker, Jr. arranged a meeting for a cross section of American Indians who acted as a Task Force to explore and sample the overall feelings of Indian participation and make recommendations to IFCO as to how they (IFCO) could assist and relate to us as Indians.

The Task Force, a group of thirty, recommends the following:

A Task Force composed of a cross section or a group of American Indians, as individuals, vote to become involved with IFCO and generally agree with the purposes of that organization. We wish to propose a statement of purpose to IFCO.

The Task Force recommends that any Indian group or organization including the Task Force desiring to join IFCO have the \$1000.00 membership waived.

We propose membership of the Task Force on the Board of Directors of IFCO so that we will have a voice on our decisions and policies affecting proposals for all programs especially affecting Indian programs.

We propose that the Task Force recommend American Indians be hired as staff members and consultants to IFCO.

We reserve the prerogative to determine our own unique and indigenous methods in affecting social change in American Indian Affairs.

We propose that the membership of this Task Force be opened to any and all American Indians.

The application for membership by the Indian Task Force was referred to the membership committee of IFCO with the highest endorsement from the Board.

NBEDC

After discussion, the Board adopted the following statement in regard to the National Black Economic Development Conference:

1. The Conference should be viewed as organizationally consistent with previous IFCO policies as they relate to community organizing, (both in the procedures of evaluating and funding proposals and of membership on the IFCO Board) The Conference, however, should be considered a priority for IFCO in the context of economic development.

2. IFCO encourages the Conference Steering Committee to become as responsive as possible to the total black community.

3. IFCO supports the programmatic aspects of the Manifesto and the other Conference resolutions.

4. It is suggested that no IFCO staff member serve on the Conference steering committee.

5. IFCO urges the churches to come up with the basic money to launch the activities of the Conference Steering Committee. This would be approximately:

\$195,000 for field staff subsistence for one year
30,000 for developing the United Black Appeal
20,000 for printing
25,000 for travel

6. IFCO relinquished its own plans to develop a United Black Appeal in recognition of the plans of the Conference to develop such an Appeal.

7. All money to be channeled through IFCO for the Conference must be money above and beyond the present church commitments to IFCO. No money which is not specifically designated for the Conference will be channeled to it.

The Executive Director of IFCO was authorized by the Board to begin formulating the requests to the churches for the \$270,000 basic money to launch the activities of the steering committee of the National Black Economic Development Conference.

The meeting adjourned.

May 13, 1969

The Most Rev. John E. Hines
815 Second Avenue
New York, N.Y.

Dear Sir:

On May 1, 1969, representatives of the National Black Economic Development Conference met with Bishop Bayne and Bishop Mosley and presented the demands of the Black Manifesto. I acted as spokesman at that meeting, and we appreciate the spirit in which we were received. We regret that you were out of the country, but we refrained from any further action with regard to the seat of Episcopal power until your return. We thank you in advance for this chance to present once more the Black Manifesto and we expect that you will use your influence and power to help us to meet the demands of the Manifesto.

While we recognize that the Episcopal Church has been active in the field of Human Rights, we want to make it quite clear that we are not asking it to cut back on any of its human rights programs, although some of them need to be reevaluated. We are in particular referring to the programs of the General Convention Special Fund. We do not want the Episcopal Church to begin playing off one group of blacks against another. The funds which we are asking is new money which we know that the Episcopal Church can raise either through direct solicitation or the liquidation of assets that it has accumulated through the years.

1. We are calling upon the Episcopal Church to make a contribution of \$60,000,000 to the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization which will be used for the implementation of the program of the National Black Economic Development Conference. That program is well outlined in the Manifesto.

Without a doubt we know that the Episcopal Church and its membership can meet this demand.

2. We also call upon the Episcopal Church to donate each year sixty percent of the profits of all its assets, including real estate and stock holding, unrelated business items, pension, retirement and investment funds.

3. We call for a complete listing of all assets of the Episcopal Churches in all the dioceses. We stress again we want to know the complete extent of the church holdings in stocks, bonds, real estate investments, unrelated business items, pension, retirement and investment funds.

We indicate for the record that in our delegation today is the Rev. Mr. Metz Rollins, Executive Director of the National Committee of Black Churchmen, whose organization has supported the demands of the National Black Economic Development Conference.

Sincerely,

James Forman

James Forman, Chairman
United Black Appeal