

Booth 306, or Four Days in Kansas City MO: A Report to the HAW—CS

Even without the four cartons of books, leaflets, magazines and HAW pamphlets sent out from New York via UPS to Marc Becker in northern Missouri, it took much of the day of Thursday, November 17th to set up HAW's booth at the 85th annual Convention of the National Conference of Social Studies (NCSS). There was first of all the 8 foot by 2 feet HAW banner to hang across the top of the curtain separating us from the swarm of pedagogical publishers pushing their 6th grade pamphlet on Sagacawea, or their 12th grade text on *How Congress Works* (a process that was given a major test on Capitol Hill by Congressman John P. Murtha, D-PA, during the NCSS convention). A nearby booth had been assigned to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and we anticipated lively debates between us and the VFW hawks, but that didn't happen.¹ Then where would our literature go in our bare 10' x 10' booth? Naively, Marv Gettleman, expected that for the \$1250 rental cost there might be a table and chair thrown in. No such luck. A table even at an extra \$100 was necessary, so I rented one, and laid out the small sample of material I brought in my baggage. Forklifts had brought from the loading docks the monstrous crates that big corporate exhibitors (Harpercollins; Holt, Rinehart & Winston; ABC-CLIO, etc.) had sent to Kansas City, and working men and working women were busily setting up the larger and smaller booths.

By next morning the exhibit floor had been swept clean, carpet had been laid, booths constructed and decorated. The social studies teachers were waiting at the bottom of the escalators for the signal to ascend. Marc appeared with the cartons, and our exhibitor ID's allowed us to wheel HAW's cargo on a hand truck right into the cavernous exhibit hall. Estimates we had heard indicated that, perhaps because it was Kansas City MO, this year's convention attracted fewer teachers. (In 2006 it will be in Washington DC, believed to be a far more attractive site.) Certainly not every person who passed by our booth expressed interest in finding out what might be done about military recruiters in the schools, or sought curricular materials that encouraged questioning the rationale for war in Iraq. (In fact, it must be admitted that HAW has produced almost no curricular material – a situation that must be addressed in the near future.) But perhaps a hundred and fifty people did stop by, talked to us, picked up the free leaflets on our table (HAW's trifold "Let History Judge," which gives a hard-hitting position against the war in Iraq

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¹ We did look at material the VFW had at its booth, and they were instructive. A slick, fat pamphlet on the cold war permitted the U.S. no initiative during that era other than responding bravely to Communist provocations. The brochures were more sinister: they featured rituals of uncritical patriotism and displays of support of U.S. troops in Afghanistan and Iraq without any intellectual content.

leaflets about school recruiting and how to battle it, and the flyer prepared for the September 24 UFPJ march-and-rally in Washington), some bought a few of the HAW pamphlets (on torture, draft resistance and the Middle East bibliographical brochure). Reflecting teachers' economic states, relatively few teachers had \$5 to spend on *Radical Teacher* #72 "Teaching in Time of War." The most significant part of our work at the NCSS convention was to talk to teachers who came to booth 306, some who just wandered by and others who noticed in the convention program book that HAW was there.² Neither Marv nor Marc were hawkers-by temperament, but we did our best, even when our energies flagged late in the day. But when Karen Green, a HAW member and a high school teacher from Aspen CO arrived on Saturday, the energy of booth 306 greatly perked up.

Not only did teacher-members of NCSS stop by (45 joined HAW and many others wanted to talk with us about the reaction to Congressman Murtha's anti-war speech), but also other exhibitors, some indicating willingness to work gratis with HAW on curricular materials. There have been some proposals within HAW about drafting Document Based Materials (DBM) on the Iraq war and current U.S. foreign policy generally, and least one of the free-lance curriculum consultants who visited booth 306 offered to put these materials into standard form for classroom teachers. Several other curriculum-related projects could possibly enrich HAW's offerings at future NCSS meetings.

The Kansas City experience revealed that exhibiting at NCSS and similar gatherings (AHA? OAH?) is a major commitment, and involves what for HAW are large expenditures. The non-profit rental fee, which may rise, is at least \$1250, plus \$100-200 for tables and chairs in the booth. (This fee entitles non-profits to 4 exhibitor personnel.) Shipment of exhibit materials to conference sites is a complicated matter. This year we had Marc and his Camry 3-hours from Kansas City. As it was, it cost about \$150 to send HAW's 4 cartons to Marc, and muscle power to get it up into the booth. Most exhibitors made use of the Freeman shipping and set-up company. Had we done so, another \$300 charged by Freeman would be added to the expense. Then there are printing costs of about \$100 to replenish low stocks of HAW pamphlets, or printing of new ones. We're talking \$2000, which of course does not cover \$300 + for each exhibitor's hotel rooms. Presumably NCSS members who are also HAW members would come to NCSS meetings for professional meetings that are sometimes paid for by local school districts or institutions. A long-term commitment to HAW's presence at history/social studies conferences may demand fund-raising, a grant from RESIST or George Soros, or from UFPJ, or some other donor. To approach our umbrella organization, UFPJ, would require courting internal political allies within UFPJ and carrying out energetic lobbying efforts before and during the next UFPJ Assembly.

² Our self-description in the 2005 NCSS convention program, probably insufficiently militant, read: "Curriculum materials, pamphlets, visuals on the war in Iraq and how it can be taught." If and when we return to NCSS we should surely expand and sharpen whatever text we write for the program book.

We can be selective as to the NCSS meetings that are attended. Kansas City in 2005 with its low attendance and (Missourians, please don't take offense) relative absence of interesting things to do and see may not have been the best place for HAW to begin. In 2006 and 2007 the national NCSS meetings will be in Washington then San Diego – prime sites with large attendance. Also, we found out in Kansas City that there are regional and local NCSS meetings (one in Boston in the spring of 2006) that, among other advantages, may cost less at which to exhibit.

Finally, another possibility is to supplement exhibits at NCSS/AHA/OAH meetings with panels sponsored by HAW. This takes planning, and long lead times. For NCSS (and probably the AHA and OAH as well) it also takes paid-up NCSS members in good standing to sponsor and (possibly) participate in panels.

Marc Becker
Marv Gettleman

HAW at the NCSS in Kansas City: Financial Report

Outlay:

Rental of booth 306 (marked item #1.....	\$1,250
Partially reimbursed by HAW	- \$600
Deduct \$75 cash from HAW memberships	- \$75
Deduct \$66 from sale of HAW pamphlets)	- \$66
Rental of Table (marked item # 2).....	\$95.65
450 copies of <i>Radical Teacher</i> #72 (invoice marked item #3)	\$500
Partially reimbursed from Kansas City Sales	- \$135
UPS shipment of <i>Radical Teacher</i> , HAW pamphlets, etc to Marc (Marv did not keep documentation)	\$98.75
Photocopying of display materials (marked item #4)	\$117.53

[Transportation & lodging costs of Marv & Marc waived]

Income (such as it was)

Sales of <i>Radical Teacher</i> (\$ 135 cash plus one check (marked Item #4 [\$5]) [\$135 sum deducted from RT invoice]	\$5
HAW Paid memberships (\$75 cash deducted from rental + Check from Alan Singer (\$25)	\$25
Sale of HAW pamphlets (all cash)	\$66

SUB-TOTALS OWED TO MARV

(\$1250 minus \$600 & \$75 & \$66)	\$509
(<i>Radical Teacher</i> : \$500 - \$135; Aside from the \$ 135 cash Marv suggests that the \$365 remainder of <i>Radical Teacher</i> issues be considered a HAW asset that can be sold at future NCSS (and AHA) meetings . Also, the <i>Radical Teacher</i> collective which printed up this batch of issues for HAW, might want to buy some back from us at some time	[-\$365]
UPS	\$98.75
Photocopying	\$117.53

GRAND TOTAL OWED MARV \$725.28