Practically speaking, the legal project operates as follows: former and current psychiatric inmates may receive, within practical limits, free legal consultation on problems regarding psychiatry. In as many cases as possible, people facing any immediate form of forced psychiatric incarceration or "treatment," will be provided with free expert legal representation. A number of inmates have been released so far and otherwise helped by the legal project. In addition, when the occasion warrants, we can afford to go to court; so far we have filed two lawsuits: one is the new version of the access suit against Haverford mentioned on p. 3. The other was filed against Haverford and Norristown State Hospital directors Fong & Harris and assorted doctors and Haverford aide Chuck Jones on behalf of ex-inmate Brian Miraglia, who was, according to the complaint, beaten by Jones, extensively and illegally restrained for days on end, and forcibly drugged with phenothiazines--even after he had been diagnosed as having phenothiazine-induced tardive dyskinesia. The suit asks for $1.25 million in damages for the many violations of Brian's rights under both state and federal law and the U.S. Constitution. (All decisions about what cases are accepted for representation are made by ALMP, not the attorneys.)

The second half of our grant package is for the operation of an ex-inmate run drop-in/support center, which is scheduled to open this spring in a residential area of West Philadelphia convenient to residents of local boarding homes. The need for ALMP to have two different centers in Phila. is that we are attempting to dismantle the psychiatric establishment on many fronts. One of these struggles involves changing the public consciousness surrounding psychiatry on an outgoing educational level--e.g., printing and distributing anti-psychiatry literature, running a phone info service, demonstrating, using the media, speaking in the community, and routine organizational "shitwork." Another struggle which in theory is intertwined, yet which in practice has been a source of conflict (both within ALMP and within other groups) is the simultaneous effort to create successful non-professional, non-medical, user-controlled alternatives to the "mental health system." We need ways of validating people's intense and frightening experiences of pain, powerlessness, frustration, and rage; ways to be supportive of each other's personal struggle to gain (political) perspective on our oppression and to struggle against it collectively; ways to create a nurturing community for those of us who have been so beaten down by society/psychiatry that we are presently unable to survive alone outside the institutions to which we have become addicted. The drop-in/support center, once it gets off the ground, will be a contribution to this effort; having a neighborhood-based support center in a relaxed, home-like atmosphere seems to us the best way to approach the question of alternatives, rather than trying to provide in-depth personal support in our hectic center-city headquarters (which because of travelling expenses is inaccessible to many neighborhood ex-inmates who are poor). West Philly is, of course, only one location among many, but hopefully we can set an example which will then spread to other areas of the city. At any rate, we're going to try.

The drop-in center is taking longer than the legal project to turn into a concrete reality. We are having a very difficult time locating a house or storefront in West Philly. In addition, bureaucratic entanglements have made it necessary to postpone our opening date due to uncertainty as to whether any money ALMP might put down on the center will be reimbursed promptly enough by NIMH; as of this writing these difficulties have not been fully resolved. By the way, if anyone knows of an available house or storefront in W. Phila., or of a sympathetic landlord, please let us know.

Financially, the grant breaks down roughly as follows: The bulk of the money (about $26,000) goes directly toward the salaries and some of the overhead of our two attorneys; about another $10,000 is for the salary of our secretary/accountant for the legal project (who works out of the attorneys' offices). About $6,000 is for the operation of the drop-in center for a year, and another $6,000 for ALMP's general operating expenses. All Alliance members are still volunteers, receiving no monetary remuneration other than traveling expenses to and from the office.

## Political Questions

Objections have been raised within the movement to the idea of accepting state or federal funds. We were aware of this when we applied for the grant, since we are as anti-government as anyone and since we have historically opposed accepting government money ourselves. We wish to discuss several of these arguments in this article.

Objection A. "When you accept money from the government cooptation is inevitable; goals are compromised by financial dependency on the enemy."

It is true that if you are dependent on your oppressor, your actions will be restricted to the point of ineffectiveness; such is the function of many seeming acts of benevolence on the part of government and big business. The key word, however, is dependence. In our particular case, dependency is not a big problem, since the Alliance would not be in danger of folding if NIMH suddenly decided to try to pull the rug out from under us. In fact, we did not apply for the grant until it became clear that we would be financially secure this year whether we received the NIMH money or not. And we wouldn't have applied for it had we not been prepared to have the grant revoked, or even sever the agreement ourselves, at any time.

(continued on page 8)