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RESIST

*a call to resist
illegitimate authority*

16 Sept - 763 Massachusetts Avenue, #4, Cambridge, Mass. - Newsletter #32

DRAFT RESISTANCE IN PUERTO RICO

Ninety-three men have been indicted for draft resistance in Puerto Rico, and Tom Dorney of the Puerto Rican Peace Center estimates that a few hundred more have either formally refused induction or simply failed to appear for induction. The high hopes raised by early legal proceedings against the ninety-three have been subdued by later court actions.

COURT CASES:

The first case led to an acquittal for Jose del Carmen Garcia Miranda in November, 1968. That initial victory was based on a violation in the order-of-call; Miranda, a member of the Pro Independence Movement, had been called before other 1-A's who should have preceded him. His acquittal sparked rapid growth in the resistance movement and apparently discouraged the government, which delayed further cases until it got the order-of-call business straightened out.

The second case came in May, 1969, and the government won its first and only conviction. It took the jury four hours to find Edwin Feliciano Grafals guilty. A motion to arrest judgement has been denied, and Grafals will be sentenced on Sept. 12th.

In July of this year lawyers for another resister--Florencio Merced Rosa--argued that their client could not receive a fair trial because the law said that the trial had to be conducted in English. This requirement clearly discriminates against Spanish-speaking defendants, and the process of translation creates special obstacles to an orderly and understandable trial. A three-judge panel was formed to hear arguments for dismissal on these and other grounds, and no other cases were heard while their decision was pending. The panel of judges recently denied the petition for dismissal. (This panel included Judge Frank M. Coffin, who wrote a dissent favorable to the defendants in the "conspiracy" case against Spock et al.) Michael Standard, attorney for Merced Rosa and a key figure in the defense of Puerto Rican resisters, predicts that prosecutions will resume this fall.

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THE FALL OFFENSIVE AGAINST THE WAR

Many groups, old and new, are planning anti-war actions for the next three months. The following is a list of the major demonstrations currently being organized. Anyone interested in helping with any of these actions should contact the RESIST office for further information.

SEPTEMBER 27: A demonstration protesting the trial of the Chicago "Conspiracy 8" (which is scheduled to begin on Sept. 24) will be held outside the courthouse in Chicago where the trial is being conducted.

OCTOBER 8-11: The Chicago-based SDS is planning four days of actions in that city around the theme "Bring the War Home".

OCTOBER 15: A moratorium on "business as usual" to protest the Vietnam war is being organized by the Vietnam Moratorium Committee, a new group containing many former McCarthy and Kennedy workers. They plan to expand the moratorium to two days in November, three in December, and so forth until the war is stopped.

OCTOBER 25: The New Mobilization Committee plans to have a demonstration in Chicago against the trial of the "Conspiracy 8". Like the September 25 demonstration, it will take place outside the courthouse where the trial is being held.

NOVEMBER 8-15: Chicago SDS is organizing a week of local actions by SDS members in their own communities against the war.

NOVEMBER 13-15: At midnight November 13 over 40,000 persons representing Americans killed in Vietnam will begin a single-file march from Arlington Cemetery past the White House to the Capitol. When the Death March ends on the morning of the 15th, there will be a massive anti-war rally. There will also be an anti-war demonstration in San Francisco on the 15th.

NOVEMBER 14: The Student Mobilization Committee is calling for a student strike against the war on this day. November 14 and 15 are also the days on which the Vietnam Moratorium Comm. plans to hold its second monthly strike.

A BRIEF HISTORY

Puerto Ricans understand very well the connection between the U.S. military draft and their own colonial status. Puerto Rico is not a state and has no representative in the U.S. Congress. Yet its young men are subject to this "blood tax" imposed by the Congress, in which they have no voice, for the purpose of waging a war which they are expected to accept without question. Many of the Puerto Rican resisters work in the Puerto Rican independence movement; many others are sympathetic to independence. These men are struggling against the U.S. government's attempt to force them into counter-revolutionary battles against other struggles for national liberation. They see the NLF and the North Vietnamese not as their enemies but as their comrades.

Historically, the Puerto Rican draft resistance movement goes back to World War I. In 1917 the U.S. Congress declared all Puerto Ricans to be citizens of the United States, over the objections of the local government, and immediately began drafting them for World War I. During World War II and the Korean War, a sporadic draft resistance movement emerged in Puerto Rico. Nationalist Party members refused to register with the draft board since they did not recognize the Treaty of Paris (1899) by which Spain had ceded Puerto Rico to the United States. Many were imprisoned.

The war in Vietnam has spurred a more systematic protest. In 1963 and 1964, members of the Pro Independence Movement (MPI) who were called before the draft board brought with them statements declaring that they would serve only under protest and against their will. They were at first rejected for army service because they were thought to be threats to U.S. security. Apparently fearing that this would swell the ranks of MPI, the draft board soon stopped this practice. In 1965 and 1966, 33 members of MPI and two from the Socialist League who refused to "serve" were indicted. One resister, Sixto Alvelo, was hauled into court.

Members of MPI were enthusiastic about his defense, which was being handled by the New York firm of Rabinowitz, Boudin, and Standard as well as by MPI lawyers. Rather than face this opposition, the court threw the case out on a pretext, asking the board to induct Alvelo again -- which it never did. The cases against the other MPI resisters were also dismissed.

SUPPORT GROUPS:

The court cases and the organized support for resistance encouraged other to refuse induction. Sixto Alvelo's case was thrown out of court; the Alvelo Committee which had been formed in his behalf continued to provide support for resisters. This year it has made a major effort to form local chapters outside of San Juan and bring support and encouragement to non-students.

Two other groups provide important assistance to the Puerto Rican resistance movement. The Legal Institute (Instituto Legal de Puerto Rico, Calle Georgetti No. 62, 2-B, Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico), in the words of its Executive Director, Roberto Jose Maldonado, "was founded precisely to centralize the legal efforts in our liberation struggle, part of which, of course, is the resistance to war." Working with the Avelo Committee, which does much of the political organizing, and with Puerto Rican and U.S. lawyers, the Legal Institute coordinates legal defense of the resisters.

Another important program is carried out by the Puerto Rican Peace Center (Centro Puertorriqueno de Paz, Box 22940, University Station, San Juan, P.R. 00931.) The Director of the Center is Tom Dorney, a former Jesuit priest who has twice returned his draft cards to his board. The Peace Center provides draft counseling daily, keeps a flow of resistance-oriented articles coming to the Puerto Rican press, publicizes the trials of resisters, and sponsors teach-ins and protest demonstrations; it is also translating into Spanish many of the memos on Selective Service regulations that have been published by the Central Committee on Conscientious Objection, as well as important articles relating to resistance. When their resources permit, people at the Peace Center would like to make these translations available to U.S. groups working with Spanish-speaking people.

Although the Puerto Rican movement has received financial help from U.S. groups (including War Resisters League, Civil Liberties Legal Defense Fund, and RESIST), its rapid growth has put a severe strain on the available resources. The Puerto Rican groups mentioned in this article would greatly appreciate any contributions or other assistance.

(Grateful acknowledgement is made to Ruth Shereff and attorney Michael Standard.)

VALUABLE MOVEMENT LITERATURE

"El Grito Del Norte" is a cry for justice in northern New Mexico. "El Grito" is a newspaper that has continued to grow in circulation and in importance to the Chicanos of this isolated area where bread and land are still the primary issues. Forty percent of the people in this area earn less than \$3000 a year, and the counties served by "El Grito" have been officially designated as a "starvation area" by the U.S. government. The paper is written in both Spanish and English so the people feel that "it is a voice of theirs." Everyone brings in or sends in stories, articles, or news items of community interest. Most importantly, "El Grito" has given the people a sense of unity, a voice to make known their grievances, and hope where there was very little before. Anyone wishing to subscribe may write: "El Grito Del Norte," Rt.2. Box 5, Espanola, New Mexico 87532.

"Rights of Man" is a working class newspaper circulated through the South. What gives this new paper its distinctive flavor are the writers who in large measure are the workers themselves. There is a notable absence of the usual revolutionary slogans and rhetoric of the left, but as the "Rights of Man" says itself -- "to those who may be disturbed by the absence of revolutionary slogans, and the omission of certain terminology to which they are accustomed-- to those people we can only say that the extent to which they feel disturbed and offended may be the measure of their separation from the working people of the country." Their address is P.O. Box 30028, New Orleans, La. 70130

LOVE FOR SALE

The Amherst painter, Wang Hui-Ming, has offered twenty copies of his new portfolio of wood-cuts (a limited edition of 100) to be sold for the benefit of RESIST.

RESIST supporters, therefore, have an opportunity to contribute to the movement and to enjoy the pleasures of Wang Hui-Ming's celebration of love.

The portfolio contains nine wood-cuts "of sensuous figures" and four pages of calligraphy in Chinese and in English, including a poem of Po Chu-I and three love poems by Robert Bly. Every page of the figure impressions is signed and numbered by the artist. The price of the portfolio is \$200. --Please make checks payable to RESIST.

(Ed. comment--They're sensational)

QUESTIONNAIRES: TO BE APPROACHED WITH CAUTION

Questionnaires, while a common and useful method of gathering data from diffuse sources, can be dangerous to the people who answer them and to others. There are several important considerations in dealing with any questionnaire (and, indeed, with any verbal or non-verbal form of interview):

- 1) Check the source of the questionnaire to be certain it is someone you can trust.

- 2) Find out what the information will be used for. Could it be used to harass or harm you or others in the Movement?

- 3) Even if the source is reliable and the purpose of the questionnaire justified, don't provide any information that is not already available or that could be incriminating to yourself or others.

Rarely is a questionnaire blatantly unacceptable, but a few minutes' consideration might reveal a potential risk. An article in Newsletter #27 describes a questionnaire circulated by the Bureau of Social Science Research which asked students who had most influenced their thinking, whether they had ever used drugs, what organizations they had been involved in, and the like. It is very likely that the data gathered will be used to set up some criteria for figuring out what types of people are likely to become involved in protest movements.

A questionnaire which on the surface seems safe but is potentially incriminating to the respondent is that currently being sent to people who turned in or burned their draft cards in Oct., 1967. Leonard Boudin, who is circulating the questionnaire, expects the results to be helpful to his defense of draft resisters (by revealing inconsistencies in draft board procedures, evidence of arbitrary decisions and irregular procedures, etc.). This questionnaire is for a worthwhile purpose and its sender a well-known friend of the Movement; therefore, people should aid him in his efforts. But people responding to it should nonetheless be very careful not to reveal hitherto unknown information which could be used to prosecute themselves or others. Even people with the best of intentions can lose their records to raids or subpoenas, and information intended only for friendly eyes has many ways of getting into unfriendly hands.

The problem of questionnaires is worthy of careful consideration by those in the Movement, in order to determine whether what is to be gained is worth the risk they present and how to handle them so that the risk is kept to an absolute minimum

A FUNDING REQUEST

Although draft calls are expected to decline, Selective Service Director Hershey has asked the House Appropriations Committee for \$3 million extra in 1970 to cope with "appeals, lawsuits, and harrassments." He also has requested a 17 per cent increase in paid staff members, pointing out that the number of appeals to state boards during each of the past two years totaled 120,000 as against 9,904 in 1965.

(Reprinted from the July, 1969 issue of WIN)

FUNDING REQUESTS GRANTED

At the September meeting of the Resist Steering Committee the following grants were made:

Vietnam GI: publication costs.

OMEGA, a high school paper in Bethalto, Ill.: for publication costs.

The Rap, (for Vista volunteers) Chicago, Ill.: for publication costs.

The Spark, high school paper in Baltimore, Md.: for publication costs.

Indiana University Committee to End the War in Vietnam: literature costs.

Arkansas Radical Media Corporation: for the first issue of their underground paper.

Jim Grant, North Carolina: local organizing.

The following grants were made during the month of August.

Draft Information Center, Bedford, Mass.: for rent and a fundraising mailing.

New England-Portsmouth Action Council, Portsmouth, N.H.: for a Harvey and Daniels rally.

Easter Weekend Anti-War Coalition, Boston: for Hiroshima Day Freedom Trail Demonstration.

American Deserters Committee, Montral, Canada: for office expenses and general supplies.

Jim Grant, North Carolina: for continuing expenses.

Illinois Black Panther Party, Chicago, Illinois: restoration expenses.

Racine Movement, Racine, Wisconsin: a loan to pay printing expenses.

THE MORATORIUM

The New Mobilizer (Sept. 5, 1969) has called for a "moratorium on business as usual" on Oct. 15. It begins with students absenting themselves from class to participate in locally (hopefully community oriented) projects; asks the support and participation of faculty; and, of course, aims to maximize public pressure to end the war in Vietnam.

The committee intends to continue the moratorium on a monthly basis, increasing its duration one day each succeeding month until there is an American withdrawal or a negotiated settlement.

RESIST people can help to strengthen the focus of the moratorium politically by participating in local press conferences and any other actions where they can make clear that what is required is prompt and complete withdrawal of American forces from Vietnam.

To volunteer for faculty press conferences write Prof. Frank Collins, Universities Committee for the Moratorium, 133 West 72nd St. New York, New York 10023.

RESOURCE MATERIALS NEEDED

Gordon J. Schochet of the Political Science Department, Rutgers University is looking for materials for an anthology of contemporary protest literature, provisionally titled Against Authority. He is interested in the reasoning and language of the Movement--especially various calls to action--its analysis of itself and of the kinds of protest that seem necessary; its descriptions and criticisms of the situations against which it is reacting. He hopes to demonstrate that some of the extreme and militant forms of protest are the result of society's failure to respond to earlier and more moderate acts. Especially useful to him would be copies of speeches and pamphlets of the last 15 years that are not generally available. He is willing to return all materials, which should be sent to him at 239-B South 8th Avenue, Highland Park, New Jersey 08904.

After the death of Ho Chi Minh, the RESIST Steering Committee sent the following expression of condolences to North Vietnamese Premier Pham Van Dong:

"We wish to express our deepest sympathy to the Vietnamese people on the death of Ho Chi Minh and our renewed commitment to the great ideal of freedom and social justice to which he devoted his life."