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Recommended Citation

Resist, "Resist Newsletter, April 24, 1970" (1970). *Resist Newsletters*. 22.
<https://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/resistnewsletter/22>

RESIST

*a call to resist
illegitimate authority*

24 April 1970 — 763 Massachusetts Avenue, #4, Cambridge, Mass. 02139 — Newsletter #41

THOUGHTS ON A DOCTRINE OF JUST DESTRUCTION--by William C. Davidon

"We are committed to a non-violent revolution against injustice. This means a non-violence of effective and continuing disruption of the machine of death and oppression in America. This means a disruption which destroys certain property when that property is used to destroy men, women, and children."

--from a statement by the East Coast Conspiracy to Save Lives, a group of eleven men and women who destroyed draft files in Philadelphia and GE files in Washington, D.C., February 6 and 7, 1970.

Everyone supports some destruction for life, if only by eating food and burning fuel. Problems arise when the things destroyed are valued by others, when the consequences of destruction are hard to predict, or when lives are threatened.

More than a million draft files in over 150 boards across the country have been destroyed within the past two years. Data on chemical warfare research have been erased from the magnetic tape on which they had been stored. Files from the lobbying offices of large corporations have been destroyed or removed and publicized. Explosions and fires have damaged corporate offices, police stations, draft and induction centers, banks, and more. How do we choose, for ourselves and RESIST, the extent and nature of our own support for and participation in these and other actions? Under what circumstances may destroying things be vital to preserving and enriching life? Can we develop a doctrine of "just destruction" within the context of continuously building a more humane, socialist society?

For some, all acts of destruction are to be rejected as violent. Others embrace them all as vanguard actions in a necessarily violent struggle. I do not

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ALMOST TWO AND ONE-HALF YEARS LATER. . .

The case of the Boston Five has finally come to an end. The Justice Department recently announced that it was dropping its charges against Mitch Goodman and Bill Coffin. This action officially terminated the case, which in reality had ended last July when the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Boston reversed the convictions of Spock, Ferber, Coffin, and Goodman. (The fifth defendant, Marc Raskin, was acquitted in the original trial.) The appellate court acquitted Spock and Ferber and ordered new trials for Goodman and Coffin. However, the Justice Department spokesman explained that, with the elimination of Spock and Ferber from the case, the remaining evidence and the testimony still available were not sufficient to warrant another trial. Since lack of evidence has been no bar to the prosecution of the Chicago Conspiracy Eight, the Nixon administration has obviously decided to concentrate on its own conspiracy prosecutions instead of further pursuing the best-known case of the Johnson administration.

FOUR OF THE CATONSVILLE NINE FAIL TO SURRENDER

All appeals denied, the Catonsville Nine (who were convicted in October, 1968 of destroying draft files in Catonsville, Maryland) were ordered to report for prison on April 9. Four (John Hogan, Tom Lewis, and Marge and Tom Melville) complied with the order and have begun serving their sentences. Dan Berrigan spoke at a rally in Ithaca, New York the following week-end, was not arrested, and his whereabouts are currently unknown. Phil Berrigan was arrested (with Dave Eberhardt of the Baltimore Four) by FBI agents on April 21 at St. Gregory the Great Roman Catholic Church in Manhattan shortly before they were to appear at a rally. George Mische and Mary Moylan, the remaining two (David Darst died in a car accident last year) are still free.

THOUGHTS ON A DOCTRINE OF JUST
DESTRUCTION cont'd. . .

find the choices so simple. For example, I favor continued destruction of draft files, war material, and some corporate files but oppose the bombing of corporate offices. What is my basis for such distinction?

1. Does the action directly debase or threaten the life of anyone? I do not believe we can achieve a more just and humane society, one in which people have real control over the means of production and the circumstances of their lives, by a transitional phase during which murder and brutality are condoned. It is necessary to make basic changes in institutional structures and power relationships, but individual men and women are not our enemies. When making these changes, we seek to minimize suffering and assist those whose lives are disrupted. Even with advance warning the bombing of corporate offices threatens lives, while tearing up 1-A draft files saves lives.

2. Does the destruction have an immediate effect on institutions committing mass murder and exploitation? Now particularly, when some are becoming desperate in their unsuccessful efforts to counter war policies, racism, and economic injustice, it is important to focus careful, limited destruction only on those things most directly used against people. 1-A draft files, supplies of weapons, documents essential to the illegitimate concentration of economic power by a few for their own profit, all are examples of such things. Windows, parked cars, and wall telephones are not.

3. Is there significant and growing opposition to the institutions being opposed, so that the destruction is not an elitist action with no popular base? The draft for the war against Vietnam is being actively opposed in many ways, so that draft file destruction serves to focus and intensify that opposition. A corporation which combines immense war production, world-wide exploitation, reactionary politics, and an awakening labor force provides a readily understood target; small subcontractors or private shops do not.

4. Does the action aggravate fear and paranoia, providing the government with a convenient justification for increased repression? Fear is increased when the

NATIONAL POETRY AWARD DONATED TO RESIST

RESIST recently received a U.S. Treasury check for \$500 from Galway Kinnell. The check was Kinnell's award from the National Endowment for the Arts for his poem, "The Bear." In accepting the award on behalf of RESIST, he sent the following explanation to Miss Nancy Hanks of the National Endowment office:

"The letter of acceptance is enclosed. I have to tell you, however, that I accept the prize only so that I may donate the money to Resist, an organization which helps draft resisters. To encourage, aid, and abet draft resisters is, I realize, a federal offense; I shall use the \$500 to commit this offense.

"If I accepted the prize money for myself, by so doing I would agree to become part of that facade of human values behind which our government wages the war in Vietnam. Moreover, it strikes me as somewhat grotesque that with one hand the government should honor poetry, whose source is love, while with the other it carries out brutal murder on a people who have done us no harm.

"I can believe that you at the National Endowment for the Arts may think that by aiding the arts you thereby in some way are counteracting, even subverting, war. I think you are wrong. In my opinion, to foster the idea that ours is a humane government as much interested in art as in war only contributes to the general irreality and hypocrisy of life now in America. Sincerely yours,
Galway Kinnell"

AND INCOME TAX REFUNDS?

Income tax refunds will soon be arriving. What better use for those U.S. Treasury checks than to endorse them, as Kinnell did his award check, "Pay to the order of Resist"? State tax refunds too!

DEBATE ON TACTICS CONTINUES

In the next issue of the newsletter we will publish excerpts from some of the letters we have received in response to the sabotage column and to Paul Lauter's article. As the debate on the nature of "violence" and its relevance as a movement tactic continues, we hope more readers will respond by sharing their views with RESIST and its supporters.

894 Protesting Students Arrested
in Itta Bena, Mississippi

Mississippi Valley State College has 2300 students; all are black. In January the Student Government Association presented 30 demands to the college president, whom they consider to be a dictator and a "Tom" to the Mississippi politicians. The president agreed to some of the demands but then refused to implement them. On February 5 the students began a boycott of classes; it was nearly 100% effective. On February 9 the student government president and vice-president were arrested after calling a protest meeting and the students were ordered back to classes. On February 10 894 students held a peaceful protest march on the campus. All were arrested.

The State Highway Patrol accomplished this with the advice and cooperation of the Justice Department. Sixty black police officers were rounded up from around the state to make the arrests while white Patrolmen stood guard outside the campus and turned away newsmen and photographers. The operation and cooperation with the Justice Department were coordinated by the state's Law Enforcement Assistance Division (LEAD), which is financed by a federal grant under the Omnibus Crime Control Act of 1968 for the purpose of "developing plans and procedures for coping with civil disorders (riot control and natural disasters) and organized crime." LEAD's executive director, Kenneth Fairly, said afterwards, "Justice Department cooperation was excellent. We were in constant contact. Department officials have looked at this situation and think it has some application for use elsewhere."

The 894 arrested students were held under a bond of \$178,000 until habeas corpus actions freed them two days later for token bonds or on personal recognizance. In the meantime, they had been suspended from college and the school had announced that anyone wishing to be re-admitted would have to sign an oath of "repentance." Two faculty members supporting the students were fired. The students are still militant but their movement has suffered from the concerted attack upon it.

Mass Mailing Leads to Prosecution
for Jury Tampering

Martha Allen and Mike Honey, organizers for the Southern Conference Educational Fund and for the National Committee to Abolish HUAC/HISC, were scheduled to go on trial on April 23 in Hart County (Kentucky) Circuit Court on charges of jury tampering. Martha and Mike are so charged for sending a letter to 1000 people in the Hart County telephone directory protesting the upcoming trial there of six black people indicted on charges related to an uprising in Louisville in 1968. Four of the people who received this letter had been called for possible jury duty for the case.

The letter was an attempt to build support for getting the case of the "Black Six" moved back to Louisville, where there was a better chance of getting black people onto the jury.

After calling the sending of the letter a "heinous crime" and asking the county grand jury to indict the senders for jury tampering, Judge Charles Richardson ordered the case of the "Black Six" back to Louisville for trial.

William Allison, who is defending Martha and Mike, asked Judge Richardson to remove himself from their case because of his "heinous crime" remark and to declare the law under which they are being prosecuted unconstitutional. Noting for the record that he was neither biased or prejudiced, Judge Richardson refused.

Grand Jury Investigates Anti-ROTC Actions

On April 6 a federal grand jury in St. Louis, Mo. began a study of anti-ROTC demonstrations at Washington University. The grand jury will also investigate the burning of one of the University's ROTC buildings to determine whether the action violated a Federal statute protecting national defense installations. The investigation is the result of a civil rights suit brought by four ROTC students, who charge that the school administration permitted protesters to deprive nonprotesters "of their rights of assembly, of orderly political process and of participation in educational and related processes." Many people fear that the investigation will provide a precedent for a new means of stifling legitimate dissent.

THOUGHTS ON A DOCTRINE OF JUST
DESTRUCTION cont'd. . .

public has no notion of what kinds of destruction will take place, who is doing the destroying, or why. The government can (and does) inflame this fear to create a climate in which more people will go along with repressive measures. Destructive acts by people who publicly identify themselves, openly discuss the reasons for their actions, encourage analysis, and accept criticism, can help to counter the violence and hatred created by war and the institutions which support it.

5. Does the action help build a more influential and coherent movement, increasing political awareness and individual commitment? Fundamental change in our technologically advanced and centralized society will not be produced by isolated guerrilla bands or by arm-chair revolutionaries. Constructive radical action must provide means for drawing people together and for their active engagement in sustained and purposeful work. To contribute to this struggle, acts of destruction must be related to a basically constructive movement operating at many levels, with trust and understanding among those with different levels of commitment and with different views on specific issues.

Vigorous, sustained, and principled resistance by all who value life is needed against the waging of war and the plundering of the world's resources. RESIST has contributed to this resistance primarily by funding diverse groups. I think it is necessary that we also contribute our own evaluations of trends both within and against the movement and clarify our own positions on violence and destruction, both reactionary and revolutionary.

BOSTON PROJECT FOR
CUBAN TEACHER EDUCATION

The Boston Project for Cuban Teacher Education is a group of teachers and graduate students, all of whom are doing classroom teaching or working on curriculum development, who are trying to help Cuban teachers learn about recent innovations and experimentation in education in other countries

Education has a high priority in Cuba and since the revolution much has been done to improve it, in spite of the fact that the American blockade of Cuba has denied Cuban teachers access to materials and information on educational developments in other parts of the world.

To help provide this information and the needed supplies, the Cuban Teacher Education Project is raising money to purchase children's books, textbooks, films, slides, and other curriculum aids for Cuba's teacher education program. To make the project a success they are in desperate need of money and/or materials. Checks should be made out to the Cuban Education Project and sent to:

Boston Project for Cuban
Teacher Education
c/o Phyllis MacEwan
12 Glenwood Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts
02139

Anyone who is interested in donating materials to the project should write to Phyllis for a list of the books the Cuban teachers want. Many, many kinds of books are needed. Why not take this opportunity to put back into use some of those books now accumulating dust on your bookshelves and in the attic?

POLITICAL SATIRE

THE RED WHITE AND BLACK is the title of a musical show about the current scene in America, words by Eric Bentley, music by Brad Burg. It's a lampoon of the Nixon era with all kinds of music, ranging from quasi-rock to pseudo-classic. To do it, you need four musicians and at least half-a-dozen actors of somewhat varied race and sex. It is especially suitable for performance as a political demonstration; parts of it could be done at a demonstration. The whole script and many of the songs are coming out as a whole issue of Liberation (May, 1970). Anyone interested in producing part or all of THE RED WHITE AND BLACK should contact Bentley or Burg in New York City. (Eric Bentley's address is 711 West End Avenue; Brad Burg's is 250 West 93rd.)