6-25-1969

Resist Newsletter, June 1969

Resist

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/resistnewsletter

Recommended Citation
https://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/resistnewsletter/139
THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY

NEW YORK CITY: On April 21, twenty-one Black Panthers were arrested and charged with conspiring to bomb several New York department stores, police stations, and the Botanical Gardens. The Panthers responded that they would not plan such actions because many of their own people would be killed. Bail was set at $100,000 each, and the 21 were divided among 7 jails in the city. To date there have been at least nine hearings requesting reductions in bail and the joining of the defendants so that their attorneys can plan their defense; all motions have been denied. Though serious felonies are generally tried about eight months after the arrests occur, the Panthers went on trial June 11. Procedures like these would seem to assure the success of later appeals but the defendants could spend several years in jail while these are pending.

SAN FRANCISCO: On April 28 several Panthers were busted for using a soundtruck without a permit, an offense that usually goes unnoticed in San Francisco. When they continued to operate the soundtruck, the cops moved in on the Panther office. One kicked in the door and reported that he found a man pointing a rifle at him. The Tac Squad called for reinforcements: cops were posted throughout the neighborhood and a helicopter circled overhead. When angry neighborhood people gathered and began to throw rocks and bottles, the cops fired grenades of CS gas into the Panther office. The 11 people who staggered out of the office were arrested; only two were ever charged.

CHICAGO: On June 4 FBI agents armed with machine guns and axes raided the office of the Illinois Black Panther

DRAFT INTERFERENCE

Within one week last month, 3 more feeding machines of the U.S. military lost portions of their files to the community of resistance: the Chicago South Side Draft Boards on May 25, the Los Angeles induction center on May 20, and the Local Board No. 53 at Silver Spring, Md. on May 21.

The Chicago Action Community (the preferred name of the Chicago 15 since it emphasizes the liaison between them and the community), fuelled a four-story high flame with mailbags filled with 1-A files and cross-records from the central board which services black and Spanish American men of the South Side ghetto. By this action they dealt with one of the more flagrant injustices of the draft system—a disproportionate burden on black and poor people in this racist war. In choosing this board they were directing their attack on the individual and interconnected evils of American militarism and racism.

This central draft board services 34 local boards. The draft call for these boards is 0 for July. The effect on operations past that time is as yet unclear.

As for the 15 men involved, they will be brought to trial on state charges of burglary, and arson, and on federal charges of interfering with the Selective Service System, destruction of gov't property, and conspiracy.

The group is also working actively towards changing both Cook County Jail and the Women's House of Correction where they were imprisoned after their arrest. They found unsanitary conditions, poor food, lack of recreation and the absence of special care for the pregnant and the mentally ill.

It is these racist and oppressive aspects of society against which the Chicago Action Community intend to rally support, rather than making an issue of their own defense.
THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY cont'd...

Party on the pretext that a fugitive was hiding there. (The fugitive was sought in connection with the murder of a Harlem Panther. Eight New Haven Panthers had already been arrested and charged with the crime: the police claim to have tapes of a kangaroo-court trial at which the victim was tortured and killed. The police claim he was to testify against the 21 New York Panthers. The Panthers claim that the victim, a member in good standing of the Harlem Panthers, was either killed or found dead by the police and used to frame the Panthers. Several other Panther offices have been raided by FBI agents looking for suspects involved in this crime.) During the Chicago raid the FBI took the cashbox, office equipment, weapons, and records; what could not be removed was destroyed. Eight Panthers were charged with harboring the fugitive (who was not found in the office) and with illegal possession of weapons (this charge had to be dropped because the agents entered without a search warrant).

These are but a few examples of the intensified harassment the Black Panther Party has been undergoing in recent months as Panther chapters grow in power and influence in black communities and as general harassment of revolutionary movement groups is increased.

A BRIEF HISTORY: When the Black Panther Party was founded in late 1966 its leaders issued this 10-point platform and program: 1. We want freedom. We want power to determine the destiny of our Black Community. 2. We want full employment for our people. 3. We want an end to the robbery by the white man of our Black Community. 4. We want decent housing, fit for shelter of human beings. 5. We want education for our people that exposes the true nature of this decedent American society. We want education that teaches us our true history and our role in the present-day society. 6. We want all black men to be exempt from military service. 7. We want an immediate end to POLICE BRUTALITY and humiliation of black people. 8. We want freedom for all black men held in federal, state, county and city prisons and jails. 9. We want all black people when brought to trial to be tried in court by a jury of their peer group or people from their black communities, as defined by the Constitution of the United States. 10. We want land, bread, housing, education, clothing, justice and peace. And as our major political objective, a United Nations-supervised plebiscite to be held throughout the black colony in which only black colonial subjects will be allowed to participate, for the purpose of determining the will of black people as to their national destiny.

In order to accomplish these objectives the Panthers have initiated various programs. Believing that point 7 of their 10-point program must be achieved before the others can be realized, they have emphasized patrolling of the police in black communities. Armed Panthers follow police cars, observe police treatment of those they stop, warn the detainee of his rights, and record any violations of correct procedure. They are prepared to use their weapons, if necessary, in defense of themselves and of anyone mistreated by the police. Recently, increasing emphasis has been placed on their free breakfast program for school children; some Panther chapters include political education in the program, others do not. Plans are being made to open health clinics in several cities. These programs fill vital community needs, and the Panthers see them as implementing the principle that the party should serve the people.

The importance of political education is stressed. The Panthers publish a national weekly paper, "The Black Panther". Each Party member must study some of the books on the basic reading list (which includes "The Communist
THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY cont'd...

Manifesto," "Red Star Over China," "Quotations from Chairman Mao," and "Autobiography of Malcolm X"); the education cadre studies each in detail and is responsible for the education of sections leaders who, in turn, educate Party members.

The Illinois Black Panther Party, one of the most active and best organized Panther groups, recruits primarily in the high schools, local colleges, and in the streets, where they reach drop-outs and street gangs. They have recently formed an alliance, the Rainbow Coalition, with other revolutionary groups in Chicago (the Young Lords, the Young Patriots, and SDS). The Rainbow Coalition plans to open an anti-repression office to provide legal and other types of assistance to the people in their communities. To date the main appeal of the Illinois Panthers has been to the young; they hope that their community service and political action programs will bring other parts of the community into active cooperation with the Party.

The Illinois Black Panther Party and other Panther chapters have two primary tasks ahead of them now: The most immediate is to survive the current attempts by federal and state governments to destroy them and their Party. The other, even more difficult, task is to involve the entire black community, in alliance with other oppressed people in America, in the process of overthrowing the various forms of illegitimate authority which oppress them and then reshaping our society.

HELP WANTED

For a new edition of his Vietnam: History, Documents and Opinions, Marvin E. Gettleman of the Department of Social Sciences, Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn (333 Jay St., Brooklyn, New York 11201) would like to inquire of movement people if they have suggestions as to items that might be included. He is particularly interested in recent articles on the protracted nature of the war and on tactics of American opposition to it.

CANADA OKAYS DESERTERS

In a surprising reversal of policy, the Canadian government has decided to permit U.S. deserters to enter Canada. Since the July 29 memorandum, Canadian border officials have had "discretionary powers" regarding American deserters, who were consistently denied entry at almost every Canadian border point. The policy reversal, however, does not alter the fact that deserters must carefully follow the procedure for immigrating to Canada. Anyone considering immigration is strongly urged to enter first as a visitor and seek counseling from a group such as the ADC (1227 Wolfe St., Montreal) or the Montreal Council (Case Postale 231, Montreal).

AND FROM SWEDEN ...

We pass on to our readers the following request from Ray Krzeminski, Grev- gatan 57 (3rd Tr), Stockholm 11549, Sweden:

"We are in the process of establishing a clearing house to meet the specific needs of American deserters (including those needs which result directly from their cultural background). We have in mind such items as paperback books, periodicals (especially those of an underground or radical nature), canned goods (with attention to American specialties), sports equipment and toilet articles; plus any assistance you might be able to offer in avoiding the excessive cigarette tax in Sweden (cigarette papers can be easily included in any correspondence or packages). We are in need of anything and everything. Nothing will be rejected."

NEWSLETTER #30

The next issue of the newsletter will focus on the recent June Actions in Washington that were co-sponsored by RESIST, FOR, Clergy and Laymen Concerned About Vietnam, and others. It will contain a report on the two days' activities and articles by several of the participants.
Three reporters were arrested along with the 15, in a departure from the way police have handled the press previously. Reporters from Kaleidoscope, a Milwaukee underground paper, and UPI were charged with the action and released on $2500 bond each.

Another action took place in Silver Spring, Md. And there also three reporters, who watched 3 men destroy all files from 1955 to the present by pouring blood and black paint on them, were subpoenaed by a federal grand jury. Two reporters were from the Guardian and one from WAVA, a local radio station. Leslie Bayless, a draft refuser, John Bayless, a non-registrant, and Michael Bransome, also a non-registrant, ransacked the office by throwing typewriters, file cabinets and other equipment out windows and around the office, and then waited for arrest. They are now awaiting trial on charges of burglary, destruction of gov't property and aiding and abetting each other in conspiracy to commit the act.

The Los Angeles action took place on the morning of May 20. Bob Siegal, Walt Skinner, and Tod Friend, all residents of Peace House, a community of draft resisters that grew out of a sanctuary for AWOL servicemen at Orange Grove Friends Meeting in Pasadena, removed 600 I-A draft files from a Los Angeles induction center and burned them.

All three of these groups acted out of the need for immediate, concrete, and positive action to meet an urgent situation. They all spoke to the primacy of human life--"There is no provision in the law for a higher morality than property rights".

Eleven of the Milwaukee 14 were found guilty of state charges and sentenced to two years because they had acted on this higher provision in Sept. '68. Judge Larson, presiding over the state trials, warned the jury that "the law does not recognize political, religious or moral convictions, or some higher law, as justification of commission of a crime, no matter how good the motive may be."

Draft file burnings are not considered by these men as an end in themselves. They are meant to create a forum for dialogue. The defense had been conducted strictly along political and moral lines, with the defendants pleading not guilty although they admitted setting fire to the draft records. The Milwaukee defendants ran their case by themselves--meeting together to plan their defense and using one another for cross-examination. They tried to introduce into evidence the immorality of the war and the justified use of dramatic tactics as a protest--John Fried, a professor of international law, stated on the stand that "the U.S. intervention in Vietnam violates the UN charter." But for the most part, the court stymied their efforts--Howard Zinn, author of Disobedience and Democracy, was brought to the trial to testify on the history and value of civil disobedience. Judge Larson threatened to charge Zinn with criminal contempt of court if he continued to insist on his right to speak.

Further dialogue in a legal setting for the Milwaukee defendants will be impossible for 10 of the 14, since the Federal charges were dismissed due to the impossibility of finding an impartial jury. Of the remaining four: two are under presentence investigation, since they had previously pleaded guilty, one was sentenced to a year since he also had pleaded guilty, and another is to receive a separate trial later on the same charges.

MOVEMENT MONEY

Between now and the trials (federal trials tentatively scheduled for September), it is essential that the Chicago 15 have the freedom to travel and talk. There is a need for money for bail and for the continuing operation of the Chicago Action Community. Funds should be earmarked for bail if a refund is requested. If you want to schedule speaking engagements for any of the 15, contact: Chicago Action Community, 1965 N. Burling, Chicago, Illinois 60614.