

# Papersellers Victimized

Michael John

1970

On Saturday, February 21, three members of the Detroit chapter of the National Committees to Combat Fascism were beaten and arrested while selling the *Black Panther* Newspaper in front of Kresge's downtown. The NCCF is a group which is affiliated with the Black Panther Party.

This attack took place at the same time as 200 people were demonstrating against the convictions in the Chicago Conspiracy trial. The protesters massed in Grand Circus Park and then marched to the Federal Building.

When the police moved in to disperse the crowd, it broke into smaller groups and went trashing downtown stores. When one of these smaller groups was moving on Kresge's, ten TMUs pulled up and attacked the crowd of radicals and shoppers.

The pigs used a window-smashing incident as an excuse to vamp on Norman McKee, Larry Powell and James Pita, all NCCF members. These brothers were beaten and arrested because they told the people not to run, that "the streets belong to the people, not to pigs." Larry was charged with interfering with an arrest and assault with intent to do great bodily harm. Norman was charged with resisting arrest and assault with intent to do great bodily harm.

James Pita was inside Kresge's taking care of a sister who had been injured in the action. Two pigs came in, singled him out and chased him out the back door. There 12 pigs beat him severely, giving him a concussion, a broken nose and body bruises. They then charged him with felonious assault.

Later that day, in court, the judge set the bail at \$500 apiece and set the preliminary hearing for March 2. On Sunday the bail money was raised and the three were released.

On Monday, the Goldfarb Bonding Agency called Larry and Norman and said that there was a mistake in the bond papers and they would have to come down and re-sign them. When they arrived at the bonding agency, the bondsman said that the bail had been raised from \$500 to \$5000.

The brothers knew this was a lie and immediately demanded to contact their lawyer. The bondsman then said that their lawyer was at the Wayne County Jail waiting for them. Larry and Norman didn't believe this because the man had already lied to them once to get them down there. As they proceeded to make a phone call to their lawyer, the bondsmen pulled guns on them and took them to the Wayne County Jail.

When Larry and Norman got to the jail they were beaten by several pigs and the bondsman, charged with two counts of assault and felonious assault, and thrown into the hole. On Tuesday they were finally released from the County Jail for the second time in three days after constant harassment by the pigs.

In other activities, the NCCF has established several Free Breakfast for School Children Programs. They plan to open several other breakfast programs and are calling on members of the community to recognize the political and social importance of these activities.

Individuals willing to work with the programs in a collective way should contact the Committee for further information. Any individuals interested in making donations of goods or funds should also move immediately.



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