

City Asked to Pay in Socialists' Shooting

Fifth Estate Collective

1966

The May 16, 1966, murder of a former Wayne State University student, Leo Bernard, and the near-fatal shooting of two others, was reviewed last week by attorney Ernest Goodman who filed a petition with Detroit Common Council requesting funds for burial costs and for medical, hospital, transportation and rehabilitation expenses.

The three young men, Bernard, 26, Jan Garrett, 22, and Walter Graham, 19, were gunned down by a deranged killer, Edward Waniolek, who entered the office of the Socialist Workers Party, 3737 Woodward Ave., with the avowed intention to "kill Communists."

Mr. Goodman, in his plea to Common Council, says the victims "were young men and university students concerned with the nature of society, its growth and development and the overriding importance of the avoidance of war which could result in the destruction of mankind."

Their assailant, Waniolek, was known to the police as a potentially dangerous, mentally deranged person. He had been under investigation by both the U.S. Secret Service and the Detroit Police. Police Detective Rojowski, as early as March, two months before the fatal shooting, urged Waniolek's wife to start proceedings to have him institutionalized. When she refused, nothing further was done.

Mr. Goodman argues that "Michigan law specifically gives the police the authority to take the initiative in instituting commitment proceedings against a socially dangerous person where the immediate family is unwilling or unable to do so.

"The police should not have placed the burden solely on the wife. For her to have proceeded may well have made her part of the 'Communist Conspiracy' to Waniolek's distorted brain and resulted in her own death.

"In any event, Waniolek's threats were directed to others in the community, to whom the police owed some responsibility for protection."

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