

Brotherly Love?

anon.

1968

PHILADELPHIA—The police state atmosphere legitimized at the Democratic Convention continues to grow. The arrest of four people here September 9 dramatizes the fact that the “authorities” will no longer tolerate any form of dissent.

The four arrested were among those seeking to make a peaceful protest at the opening of Hubert Humphrey’s presidential campaign in Philadelphia. Three of the four were members of the Philadelphia Resistance. The fourth, Ronald Whitehorse, is a member of People for Human Rights (PHR), the Philadelphia affiliate of National People Against Racism (PAR).

The severe charges brought against the four, none of whom even sought to commit civil disobedience, are: Disorderly Conduct; Resisting Arrest; Aggravated Assault and Battery on a Police Officer; and Interfering with a Public Gathering. The three Resistance members were also charged with conspiracy.

The arrests were the result of a demonstration organized by PHR, the Resistance, and Clergy and Laymen Concerned about Vietnam around the theme: “A vote for Humphrey, Nixon or Wallace is a vote for death, racism, and repression.”

Whitehorn, who was subsequently suspended from his job with the city welfare department, was arrested by eight policemen as he sought to move toward a TV camera in order to publicly burn his voter registration card as a symbol of his disgust with the electoral process. About twenty cards were burned by members of the crowd.

The Resistance members attempted to display anti-war placards as Humphrey’s motorcade passed. They were beaten to the ground and held there by police until Humphrey had passed. They were then arrested.

Others in the crowd, although not arrested, were also harassed and pushed around by police and other “security agents.” The site that police authorized for demonstrations was two blocks behind the speaker’s stand where the Humphrey rally took place.

As in Chicago, the cover offered for all repressive measures was “security”. Humphrey, visibly agitated by the signs, leaflets and heckling which the police were unable to prevent, stopped denouncing Nixon midway through his speech and launched into a tirade against extremists.

In commenting on the arrests, Frank H. Joyce, National Director of PAR, issued the following statement:

“The arrest of any member of a political organization can hardly come as a surprise. We are entering an era of repression which will make Joseph McCarthy look like a civil libertarian. Events at the political convention in Chicago and Miami (where three black people were killed) should have made clear to everyone the extremes to which a system will go out of its own fear rather than respond to legitimate demands for change. The Bill of Rights has become a luxury this system can no longer afford—a system so corrupt it offers Wallace, Nixon, and Humphrey as alternatives for its Commander-in-Chief.”

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