

# GI coffee house bust set up

Liberation News Service

WRIGHTSTOWN, N.J. (LNS)—This town is a commercial appendage to Fort Dix. Wrightstown is shopping centers, gas stations, greaseburger palaces and bars.

The town is a bore. GIs leaving the base leave their money in Wrightstown cash registers. They return to the base broke and desperate.

A group of experienced movement organizers rented a vacant imitation ice cream store on the main street of town, walking distance from the Fort. The organizers turned the store into a coffee house—coffee, punch, posters, underground newspapers, music; a place to talk and be relaxed. The GIs came.

At present, similar coffee houses can be found at three other Army bases—near Fort Jackson, S.C., Fort Lewis, Wash., and Fort Hood, Texas. More are in the planning stages.

The military brass and local police harassed the Dix coffee house staff. People were arrested for phony traffic violations. The staff's Wrightstown apartment was raided. But the GIs want the coffee house and the staff knows it. The coffee house survives; more GIs come every night.

Now, a highly reliable source in the executive branch of the New Jersey state government has told staff members of the Fort Dix Coffee House that the government is preparing for mass arrests of civilians and GIs.

According to the source, the charges will be that the coffee house is the “Major source of heroin” in the Fort Dix area.

At a press conference at the American Civil Liberties Union headquarters here, three coffee house staffers, Josie Duke, Sam Karp and Bob Tomashevsky, explained the political motivations behind the government's charges.

This latest move by the government fits into a pattern of harassment and intimidation that began even before the coffee house opened its doors to GIs on April 25<sup>th</sup>.

Staffers have been arrested more than a dozen times, often on minor traffic violations (one staff member was held on \$100 bail for allegedly failing to give a traffic signal—a violation that calls for a \$25 fine).

Sometimes they are set up for more serious charges, like assault and battery, where witnesses suddenly materialize to agree that they saw something happen that didn't. Four cases on a variety of charges are still pending in the courts.

These efforts to stop the GI movement have clearly failed. GIs in increasing numbers come to the coffeehouse and thirty of them meet regularly to put out their own newspaper, 'Shakedown. The rebellion in the Fort Dix stockade in June was just one indication of the ways GIs are getting together and fighting for their human rights.

Petitions are circulating throughout the base in support of the 38 GIs implicated by the Army in the stockade rebellion. The petitions call for all charges to be dropped against the 38, for the abolition of army stockades on all army bases, and for the release of all political prisoners, like Huey Newton and members of the New York Black Panther Party now being held on exorbitant bails.

Steve Nagler, executive director of the New Jersey ACLU, said that anyone who believed “these incredibly trumped-up charges” is either naive or dishonest. In a letter sent to the New Jersey State Attorney General, Arthur J. Sills, Nagler demanded an end to the police state tactics being carried out by New Jersey State Police in cooperation with the Army.

But the repressive machinery of the state is in full gear. The coffee house staffers believe the raid is imminent. On July 11, a staff member found a small quantity of pot planted in the bathroom of the coffee house and quickly flushed it down the toilet.

Two days later, two GIs on their way to the coffee house were picked up, brought to the State Police barracks and questioned about how much pot was smoked and sold at the coffee house. The cops said that if they told anyone about what transpired at the barracks, they would have to deal with the military police.

The GIs not only told the coffee house staff what happened, but also signed affidavits to the effect that narcotics were never sold or used in the coffee house.

With Nixon talking about “no-knock” warrants for cops in search of narcotics and with more than 200 SDS people arrested on phony drug charges in the month of May alone, it looks like the local authorities have the go-ahead to make arrests on the flimsiest of pretexts.

The coffee house staff hopes that the publicity generated from their press conference will discourage Attorney General Sills from moving on the trumped-up charges. The only certainty right now, however, is that no matter who they get this time, there are others waiting to take their place.

Contributions for aid to the project and the bail fund should be sent to: Fort Dix Coffee House Project, P.O. Box 68, Wrightstown, New Jersey.

## **Related**

See “Support for Dix 38” in this issue.

See *Fifth Estate's* Vietnam Resource Page.

# fifth Estate

Liberation News Service  
GI coffee house bust set up

<https://www.fifthestate.org/archive/86-august-21-september-3-1969/gi-coffee-house-bust-set-up>

Fifth Estate #86, August 21-September 3, 1969

**[fifthestate.anarchistlibraries.net](https://www.fifthestate.org)**