

Conspiracy!

Liberation News Service

CHICAGO (LNS)—The coercive machinery of nationwide political repression is high-powered and well-tooled. The use of laws which blatantly restrict the basic precepts of Constitutional democracy—the abstract freedoms of speech, press and assembly—is constantly growing.

While a frame-up on non-political charges (from possession of marijuana to -trespassing) is still the most frequent form of repression, the government is now turning to more direct methods of silencing its opposition.

The anti-riot section of the 1968 Civil Rights Act permits the federal government to throw any radical or movement organizer into jail for five years if he so much as discusses a planned demonstration or rally with two or more people.

In its first run, the government is trying to pin the responsibility for the police riot in Chicago during last August's Democratic Convention on the shoulders of 8 "key" movement people—Rennie Davis, Dave Dellinger, John Froines, Tom Hayden, Abbie Hoffman, Jerry Rubin, Bobby Seale and Lee Weiner. If convicted, the 8 men face up to ten years in jail and up to \$20,000 per defendant in fines.

The conspirators make rather strange bedfellows, representing widely different points of view within the movement.

Three of the men were leaders of the National Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam, a coalition of radicals and liberals which called for large demonstrations outside the convention.

They are: Dave Dellinger, whose pacifist ideology put him in jail during World War II; Tom Hayden, one of the leaders of the Port Huron Conference which founded SDS seven years ago, though he hasn't been active inside SDS in recent times; and Rennie Davis, an urban-community organizer.

The chief promoters of the Yippie media myth, Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin, are perhaps more glamorous defendants than the Mobe organizers. Abbie and Jerry are the personification of everything Chicago's Mayor Daley finds disgusting. They devote most of their energies to no-holds-barred spur-of-the-moment theater—street theater in the streets and theater of the absurd in Congressional committee meetings—a tactic which obviously disturbs the government even tho it does not involve a disciplined revolutionary organization.

John Froines and Lee Weiner are university radicals.

John is an assistant professor of chemistry at the University of Oregon and Lee is a research assistant at Northwestern University in Chicago.

While the government's attack on Froines and Weiner is somewhat mysterious because they are so much more obscure than the other defendants, certainly the most amazing indictment is that of Black Panther Party Chairman Bobby Seale.

The illegitimacy of Seale's indictment is even clearer considering the fact that he spent less than 4 hours in Chicago during Convention Week—to deliver 2 speeches, which bore no clear relation to any other action.

In order to keep the offensive, the 8 "conspirators" have set up an office in Chicago under the name of The Conspiracy. They do not plan to sit quietly until their trial starts on or about Sept. 24.

So far the Conspiracy's lawyers—Charles Garry, Bill Kunstler, Lennie Weinglass, Mike Tigar, Mike Kennedy and Jerry Lefcourt—have conducted a fruitless campaign of court motions to force some semblance of due process out of the U.S. government.

The presiding judge assigned to the Conspiracy trial is Judge Julius Hoffman, often called Mr. Magoo for his startling resemblance to the General Electric Company's near-sighted mascot.

Judge Magoo is 74 years old and many Conspiracy staff members are making bets that he won't live past the trial. His wife is a major stock-holder in a corporation which makes gadgets for the Vietnam war, and, not surprisingly, he has a record of giving draft resisters and other "subversives" the harshest penalties permitted by law.

After three costly delays, Magoo decided not to rule on a defense motion for the release of illegal wiretap records the government readily admits to having. The reason?

The motion was of such a heavy nature that Magoo felt he could not possibly rule on it until after the trial was over. Conspirator Abbie Hoffman retaliated with a claim that he is Judge Hoffman's illegitimate nephew, but Magoo was unmoved.

Another figure in the kangaroo court is the prosecutor, U.S. District Attorney Thomas Foran, a Democrat who suddenly started working to build a go-getter, gangbuster image a couple of months ago when he realized that Nixon might decide to replace him.

His assistant, Richard Schultz, sees the trial as an apocalypse: convict the Eight and save the Nation!

The Conspiracy staff has been cooperating with Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) in plans for a national action in the fall. The main slogan for that action is "Bring the War Home!"—a new and more intense phase in the struggle against U.S. imperialism.

The action is scheduled for October 8 thru 11, centering in Chicago with support actions throughout the country.

On Friday, October 10, there will be a march on the Federal Building to protest the Conspiracy trial. The following day, a massive march will be held to call for the withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Vietnam.

The laws under which the Eight have been indicted may well surface again in the government's drive to crush the national action.

The Thurmond Amendment to the 1968 Civil Rights Act makes it illegal to cross state lines or use interstate commerce (such as mail, telephone, television and other communications) with the intent to "incite, organize, promote, encourage, participate in, or carry on a riot."

A riot is defined as an act or threat of violence by one person in a group of 3 or more. The key word is "intent"—a riot need never occur. Thought-crimes are already on the books!

Another of Attorney General John Mitchell's chief weapons in stifling the government's opponents is the Long Amendment to the same act. This amendment—Louisiana Senator Russell Long's contribution to the jurisprudence of repression—makes it a felony to make any effort to get in the way of any cop who is going about his "business."

Combine that one with the conspiracy laws which make it illegal for two or more people to "agree" on an illegal plan, even if they never make an illegal move, and you have all the necessary machinery for a police state.

The Conspiracy refuses to make the trial a matter of apologetic technicalities. Abbie Hoffman says, "We aren't playing games. This is the biggest political trial of the century."

The Conspiracy has available a variety of literature, including leaflets, bumper-stickers, buttons and posters. A brochure describes the case in detail.

The button, brochure and bumper-sticker are being sold for 25 cents each, the poster costs 50 cents and the leaflets are free.

Postage and contributions are appreciated. Address inquiries and orders to: The Conspiracy, 28 E. Jackson, Chicago, Illinois 60604, phone: 312--427-7773.



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