

Cuban exiles bomb Socialist hall; New committee to force police to act

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A Citizen's Committee has been formed in Los Angeles in response to the arson attack on the Socialist Workers Party Headquarters. Named the Citizens' Committee for the Right of Free Expression, the organization is asking for a full-scale investigation into the fire-bombing and the arrest and conviction of those responsible for the attack.

The following people have already made this demand for arrest and conviction. (Organizations are listed for identification only.)

G.J. Cohen, General Rep., Associated Students, UCLA.

Arnold S. Kaufman, Pres., American Federation of Teachers, Local 1990, UCLA.

John T. Williams, V.P., Teamsters Local 208.

Frank Candida, Editor, Cal State LA College Times.

John Parker, Editor, UCLA Daily Bruin.

Barry Krugel, Pres., Cal State LA VIVA.

Malcolm Dobbs, Pres., LA Local 535, Social Services Union AFL-CIO.

Paul Perlin, Member, International Exec. Board, Int'l Longshoreman's and Warehouseman's Union.

Saul Sancedo, Stu. Body Pres., Cal. State LA.

William G. Smith, National Lawyers' Guild.

Strike Committees at LACC, Valley State, Long Beach State, UC Riverside.

The Committee was formed in response to a series of terrorist attacks in the Los Angeles area. The most recent attack occurred May 27 at the campaign headquarters of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). On that day, at approximately 12:40 P.M., a band of heavily armed men entered the building. Four campaign workers, Peter Seidman, Sally Whicker, Carole Seidman and Tiby Alvin, were in the office at the time. Armed with M-1 semi-automatics and submachine guns, the terrorists forced those present into one room and made them lie face

down on the floor. According to Carole Seidman, the invaders continually shouted, "You will die for Fidel!" and "We are going to kill you commies."

While the victims were being held at gunpoint, other members of the invasion force began smashing kitchen utensils, pulling down bookshelves and overturning desks. They then poured gasoline all over the floors and walls and ignited the office.

As the terrorists fled the scene, Peter Seidman began trying to put out the flames with a fire extinguisher. When Seidman realized this was futile, the magnitude of the flames being too great, the occupants fled down the fire escape.

Those present all agreed that the attackers were Cubans. Judging from the statements made and patterns of previous attacks, the terrorists appear to be anti-Castro Cubans or, as they are sometimes referred to, gusanos (worms). In past attacks, stickers espousing "Cuban Power" and anti-Castro slogans have been left behind. The list of their attacks in the Los Angeles area goes back almost a decade.

In March, 1961, and again in 1963, armed groups of gusanos tried to break up meetings of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee.

In 1967, 16 gusanos disrupted a meeting at the Baldwin Park Civic Center sponsored by two churches. Shouting anti-Castro slogans, the attackers threw tear-gas bombs and broke up furniture.

In Nov., 1968, the *Campus News* at East Los Angeles Junior College was bombed, allegedly by gusanos.

In Aug., 1969, three armed gusanos entered the offices of the Peace Action Council and rifled the files of the National Committee to Abolish HUAC. They also destroyed equipment and held three people at gunpoint.

On April 13, 1970, a group of heavily armed gusanos invaded the Haymarket, a meeting place for revolutionaries in the Echo Park area. After spraying one man's eyes with oven cleaner, the gusanos, armed with M-1 carbines,

forced everyone to lie on the floor. They then poured gasoline on the entire building. After starting a large fire, they fled. The Haymarket, almost totally destroyed, was forced to close.

Other bombings attributed to gusanos include the Mexican Tourist Department, Shell Data Processing Center, Air France, and Japan Air Lines.

Although many other attacks have taken place, the SWP and the Young Socialist Alliance have been prime targets for the gusano terrorism.

The Socialist Workers Party has been physically attacked five times in the last two years. The first attack, an abortive one, took place May 10, 1968. During a public meeting of the SWP and YSA, a bomb was found at the headquarters. The bomb was defused before it exploded though, and there were no injuries to any of those attending the meeting.

On Oct. 16, 1968, their headquarters was dynamited with considerable damage. Some time during the attack one of the assailants left a "Cuban Power" sticker at the scene.

On Dec. 31, 1969, three men held a man and woman at gunpoint while they firebombed and tear-gassed the meeting. The house had been advertised as the location of a party celebrating the 15th anniversary of the Cuban Revolution, sponsored by both SWP and YSA.

On March 30, 1970, seven shots from three separate guns were fired into SWP headquarters.

The most recent attack, May 27, has been described previously.

It was in response to these attacks, as well as inaction on the part of the Los Angeles Police Department, that the Citizen's Committee for the Right of Free Political Expression was formed. The Committee will try to generate massive public support so that arrests and convictions can be obtained. At present, the LAPD has made no arrests on any of the five attacks on the SWP.

The functions of the Committee, in generating support, will be publicity for the attacks, obtaining solidarity statements, sending delegations to see city officials, and a massive petition-letter writing campaign. The petition, which supporters are signing, reads in part, "I support the campaign of the Citizen's Committee to secure the arrest and conviction of those responsible for the May 27 arson attack . . ." Support has come in from trade unions, newspaper editors, college strike committees, anti-war organizations and other groups.

Another function of the Committee will be to raise funds to refurbish damage done by the raid. Over \$10,000 damage was done to literature, office equipment, furniture and fixtures, as well as to the building itself.

Any person interested in signing the solidarity petition, volunteering much-needed time, or donating funds to refurbish the headquarters should contact the Citizen's Committee, 1702 E. 4th St., LA, 90033, or call AN 9-4953 or 262-4670.



Socialist Workers Party meeting hall after bombing by Cuban exiles.

Photo by John Gray