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 Candelita, Editor, Cal State LA College Times.
John Parker, Editor, UCLA Daily Bruin.
Barry Krugel, Pres., Cal State LA VIVA.
Malcolm Dobbs, Pres., LA Local of Social Services Union AFL-CIO.
Paul Perlin, Member, International Executive Committee, Int'l Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union.
Sanford, Body Pres., Social Services Union.
William G. Smith, National Lawyering 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 bomb exploded in the offices of the National Committee to Abolish HUAC. The bomb killed one man and two women. According to Carole Sedman, the invaders continued shouting, "You will die for 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, on a portable 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 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 fired into SWP headquarters (cubing the house). The house had been used as the location of a party celebrating the 1st 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 Citizens' 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 to create public solidarity, petition, enlisting the support of other organizations and groups.

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

A person interested in signing the petition, donation, or committee, should contact the Citizens' Committee, 1700 E. 4th St., L.A., 90033, or call AN 9-4953 or 262-4670.
Socialist Workers Party meeting hall after bombing by Cuban exiles.

Photo by John Gray