After having his hands slapped over the Bird sellers case last year, Massell and the police had been steering clear of newspaper peddlers until the police murder of a black Muslim who was selling Muhammad Speaks occurred on Broad Street last fall.

You may remember that in April of 1972, the mayor decided to harass the Bird out of existence, after we refused to cooperate with the city's plans for destroying the strip.

After nine people were arrested in one day for selling the Bird without a license, we went to court. Shortly after that, the city withdrew the ordinance knowing full well that it was unconstitutional. At the same time, US District Court Judge Moye enjoined the city from further harassment of Bird sellers.

Since the Muslim shooting in June, the city has renewed its attacks on sellers of left wing and alternative newspapers. This time however they're using different tactics---enforcing charges like creating a turmoil, impeding traffic, etc. In addition to Muhammad Speaks, sellers of the Black Panther Party Newspaper, the Bird, the Call (newspaper of the October League), the Militant, (newspaper of the SWP) and Challenge, (newspaper of the Progressive Labor Party) have all been either harassed or arrested.

Earlier this month, Carolyn Eubanks of PL was carried off in a paddy wagon while selling Challenge at Broad and Hunter Streets. Although Eubanks was peacefully hawking the paper, it took five cops to arrest her and twenty minutes to come up with charges. She was eventually charged with violating the safe street and sidewalk act, creating a turmoil and using profane and abusive language.

The neighboring police of East Point and Hapeville are also taking up the attack on newspaper sellers, and on Monday, Aug. 20th, seven people were arrested while selling the Call outside the Owens-Illinois plant in East Point. The October League (OL) has sold at this plant for the past three or four months and sales of the paper have been going quite well. At the same time there's been a lot of militancy inside the plant. Company officials have become increasingly concerned about having a communist newspaper sold outside Owens, and have been harassing Call sellers for the past month.

On the morning of the arrests, a man and a woman came out to the plant to sell the paper and the man was beaten up by a foreman. That afternoon, four more sellers came back and started hawking the paper. This time the company tried to get a goon squad together from amongst the workers, but all they could muster up were some foremen, company officials, and two older white workers. The goons surrounded the sellers, thinking that no one would pass the line and buy the paper.

People did, however, walk through the line and buy the paper, while everyone inside was getting a view of what the company was trying to do. After nine people were arrested, the East Point police arrested the sellers for criminal trespass and impeding traffic. All four were actually standing on the sidewalk in front on the plant. It's pretty obvious, of course, who was impeding traffic.

Exercise your first amendment right to a free press, members of the OL went back to Owens that night. This time they were standing on the other side of the street, which is in the city of Hapeville. Two white women were outside the plant talking with the Hapeville police and plant management, when one of the sellers was arrested—the charge was public indecency. (One of the women had said that he had urinated in front of them.)

When the two others walked across the street, they were arrested for trespassing. So by Monday night, seven people had been arrested for selling the Call and a total bail of $3500 had been imposed. ($500 bond a piece, an incredibly high bond for such charges)

In an open show of cooperation with Owens, the Atlanta Constitution published a short article on the incident which included the names and addresses of all those who were arrested.

Some of these people have already lost their jobs and others certainly have been inconvenienced. There was no reason for the Constitution to report on this except to expose the seven people arrested to a public trial by the most anti-communist and reactionary elements in Atlanta.

The OL attributes this harassment to the rising popularity of the Call, both in plants and in the downtown area, as well as to the general harassment of left wing newspapers in Atlanta.

At a press conference in front of Owens last Friday, Sherman Miller of the OL said, "The arrests made here at Owens are the culmination of a whole series of attempts by the Atlanta and East Point Police Departments and a number of factory owners to harass and intimidate Call sellers and October League members off the streets. My presence here today is an indication that these tactics have failed.... These tactics are in direct violation of the first amendment. The October League will continue to sell its newspaper the Call and will react to any further attempts at harassment. All those who wish to see the continuation of a free press—join us in this fight!"

The October League plans now to take Owens to court and fight this illegal harassment.