

P.O. Box 471 Cooper Station
New York, N.Y. 10003

October 29, 1974

TO ALL ORGANIZERS

Dear Comrades,

Today the YSA filed a motion in federal court seeking a temporary injunction to halt FBI surveillance of our upcoming St. Louis convention. The motion is being filed as part of the overall YSA and SWP lawsuit which demands a permanent injunction against all such harassment. It was announced at a press conference held this morning in the office of attorney Leonard Boudin who is handling the case.

Enclosed are the following materials relating to this special motion: 1. a sample news article; 2. a fact sheet; 3. a statement by Delpfine Welch; and 4. a statement by the Political Rights Defense Fund.

This new aspect of our democratic rights offensive can open up important opportunities to gain endorsers and financial support for PRDF. Locals should carefully think out ways to tap these new openings.

The opportunities for publicizing the YSA convention are also tremendous. The YSA's offensive against FBI surveillance should be at the very center of all our convention-building activities and materials throughout the remainder of the fall. Our theme should be: Protest FBI harassment! Show the FBI that we will not be intimidated! Exercise your First Amendment rights by coming to the Young Socialist National Convention where we will map out a plan of action to fight back against government attacks!

Every copy of the Young Socialist sold during November, the last month of our fall sales drive, should be a convention-building sale. The YS will feature the motion on the back page.

The enclosed sample article can be retyped and submitted to campus and local "underground" newspapers. We can also approach the campus press to interview us about the YSA's response to FBI surveillance, especially next month when YSA national leaders will be on tour to build the convention.

Locals should contact student governments about passing motions demanding a halt to FBI surveillance of the YSA. Protest letters and telegrams to FBI director Clarence Kelley can be collected from other campus groups and from professors. Some locals may even want to use such a motion or letter as the text of a broadly-signed ad or letter to the editor in the campus newspaper.

Comradely,

Steve Clark
Steve Clark
YSA National Office

For release 10:30 AM
October 29, 1974

For more information contact
Catherine Perkus 212/691-3270

SOCIALISTS SEEK INJUNCTION AGAINST FBI SURVEILLANCE

NEW YORK, Oct. 29 -- The Young Socialist Alliance and Socialist Workers Party filed a motion in federal court today for a preliminary injunction to stop FBI surveillance of the upcoming national convention of the YSA in St. Louis, Missouri, scheduled for December.

The socialists claimed that the planned surveillance violates their First Amendment rights of free speech and association.

FBI agents told an employee of St. Louis' Jefferson Hotel, site of the convention, that they would monitor the socialists' five-day meeting.

At a news conference today in his law offices, attorney Leonard Boudin explained that the motion is part of a civil suit to win a permanent injunction against the government's unconstitutional harassment of political opponents. That suit was filed on behalf of the SWP and YSA in July, 1973.

Boudin requested oral arguments in court on the motion. The government has until November 5 to respond.

The socialists argue that FBI surveillance violates their First Amendment rights because "it is an official inquisition into the participants and discussions at a peaceable assembly of supporters of a minority political party and its electoral

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candidates."

During the week of the convention, the SWP is holding a rally to launch its 1976 presidential campaign. According to Delpfine Welch, YSA national organization secretary, the convention will include discussion of the YSA's national effort to win supporters for the 1976 SWP presidential slate.

Attorneys for the SWP and YSA maintained that FBI surveillance would have "an inhibiting effect" on attendance at the convention. Their court brief argues that conventioners "would become sitting ducks for government name-takers and photographers."

To buttress their contentions, the socialists produced copies of Civil Service Commission reports on five former government employees who were threatened with dismissal from their jobs because of their attendance at YSA conventions and SWP campaign rallies.

According to Syd Stapleton, national secretary of the Political Rights Defense Fund, a civil liberties group which is financing the socialists' suit, "the FBI's plans to spy on this convention prove that the Ford administration is continuing the government's illegal snooping and harassment where the Nixon administration left off."

Delpfine Welch said that "hundreds of young people will be attending the YSA convention to plan how to fight this kind of Watergate-style harassment. The government is trying to stifle political dissent but we will not be intimidated. We plan to answer this attack by redoubling our efforts to build a large and successful convention."

Political Rights Defense Fund
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FACT SHEET ON 10/29/74 MOTION FOR A PRELIMINARY INJUNCTION TO STOP
FBI SURVEILLANCE OF CONVENTION OF THE YOUNG SOCIALIST ALLIANCE

In Aug., 1974, the FBI announced that it planned to monitor the upcoming annual convention of the Young Socialist Alliance.

On Oct. 29, 1974, the YSA and the Socialist Workers Party filed a motion for a preliminary injunction to stop the FBI "from attending, surveilling, listening to, watching, or in any way monitoring the 14th National Convention" of the YSA to be held in the Jefferson Hotel in St. Louis, Missouri, from Dec. 28, 1974 through Jan. 1, 1975. The SWP is holding a public rally at the hotel during that week to launch its 1976 presidential campaign.

The motion for a preliminary injunction is part of a civil suit against the government filed in July, 1973, by attorney Leonard Boudin on behalf of the SWP and YSA. That suit seeks a permanent injunction against a variety of unconstitutional government harassment tactics.

Attorneys Leonard Boudin and Herbert Jordan argue that:

-- FBI monitoring of the YSA convention and SWP rally violates the First Amendment since it is "an official inquisition into the participants and discussions at a peaceable assembly of supporters of a minority political party and its electoral candidates."

-- FBI monitoring follows the pattern of official FBI policy of attempting to disrupt, discredit and inhibit the growth of the SWP and YSA as outlined in the FBI's "Counterintelligence Programs" and "SWP Disruption Program." The government admitted that it initiated this program in order to "cause disruption within the SWP."

-- FBI monitoring, which attempts to brand the SWP and YSA as illegal, will have an inhibiting effect on attendance at the convention.

Several statements were also filed, including:

-- An affidavit from an employee of the Jefferson Hotel who said that an FBI agent told her that the FBI "would be on the premises... and would keep an eye on the convention."

-- Civil Service Commission reports on five former government employees. These reports cited attendance at conventions and campaign rallies as reasons for firing these people from their government jobs.

-- An affidavit from Jeff Feather, member of the Cleveland YSA, who said he has met several students on his convention building tour of Ohio campuses who would come to the convention but for their fear of FBI surveillance and subsequent reprisals.

-- Affidavits from three YSA members who said they were inhibited from attending previous conventions because of their fear of surveillance.

Attorneys for the SWP and YSA have requested oral arguments. The government has until November 5, 1974 to answer this motion.

young Socialist Alliance

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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STATEMENT BY DELFINE WELCH, YOUNG SOCIALIST ALLIANCE NATIONAL ORGANIZATION SECRETARY, TO NEWS CONFERENCE ON OCTOBER 29, 1974

"When I first learned of the FBI's visit to the Jefferson Hotel Sales Department, I was outraged at this latest revelation of the government's ongoing campaign of harassing socialists and others fighting for social change.

"By conducting surveillance of our convention, the FBI hopes to stigmatize the YSA, closing ears and minds to our socialist ideas. A cloud of suspicion is cast over our completely legal convention proceedings and other political activities.

"In reality, the YSA is an entirely lawful organization of young people who are socialist in our political convictions and who actively participate in the struggles of students, Blacks, women, working people and all those who are oppressed and exploited. The events of the past decade have shown that the real lawbreakers can be found in the White House and Congress, not in the FBI "subversive" files.

"Wasn't it Gerald Ford who torpedoed enforcement of Boston's court-ordered desegregation plan by publicly denouncing so-called forced busing? And who committed mass murder in Vietnam, broke into the office of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist, and illegally financed efforts to topple the elected government of Chile?

"The St. Louis convention will launch the YSA's national effort to win supporters to the 1976 presidential slate of the Socialist

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Workers Party. The SWP candidates will be announced during our convention at a widely-publicized rally at the Jefferson Hotel.

"This fall, the YSA is actively publicizing the convention. Fifteen Young Socialist teams have been on the road since Oct. 1 talking to students about socialism and inviting them to St. Louis.

"These efforts to maximize attendance at our convention are the real target of the planned FBI surveillance. The FBI has made no secret of the fact that it uses attendance as a basis for punitive action, ranging from embarrassing interviews with employers, parents and landlords, up to actual or threatened loss of government jobs. Fear of such victimization prevents many current or potential YSA members and supporters from attending our conventions.

"We are tired of Washington's Watergate-style tactics to stifle political dissent. We demand that the FBI halt its surveillance of the YSA. We are urging young people across the country to exercise their First Amendment rights next December by coming to the Young Socialist National Convention and helping to build the movement for a truly democratic society -- a socialist society."

STATEMENT OF SYD STAPLETON,
NATIONAL SECRETARY, PRDF, TO
NEWS CONFERENCE, OCTOBER 29, 1974.

Supporters of civil liberties can not rely on the Ford Administration to show respect for the Bill of Rights. The recent FBI announcement of its intention to monitor the fourteenth national convention of the Young Socialist Alliance is proof of this fact.

When he first assumed office, Ford promised an end to illegal wiretapping, burglary, and surveillance. The massive public opposition to Nixon's "Watergate" crimes forced Ford to make this promise. Since then, Attorney General Saxbe and FBI Director Kelley have been on a virtual crusade to convince us that we can rely on the "maturity" of the Justice Department and FBI to protect civil liberties. Recently, however, the ugly reality of the new administration's position has been increasingly exposed.

The Justice Department announced it intends to defend Nixon against five Watergate-related civil suits, including those by Jane Fonda and the SWP and YSA. In doing so, the Justice Department made it clear that this was not simply a part of Ford's generous largesse to Nixon. The main purpose of the action was to protect "continuing functions of the government" according to the Justice Department.

The FBI plan to monitor the up-coming convention of the YSA and a concurrent campaign rally of the Socialist Workers 1976 Presidential Campaign is just one aspect of the illegal snooping that the Ford Administration considers "continuing functions of the government".

Meanwhile, the FBI and Justice Department are pressing to increase warrantless wire-taps and to build a super-computerized records network. Administration officials are trying to push through Congress thought-control legislation which would be potentially more repressive than the notorious McCarthy-era witch-hunt laws. Even after the supposed abolition of the Attorney General's list, socialists and other dissenters are being hounded from their jobs in the federal government. FBI Director Clarence Kelley contemptuously refers to opponents of these measures as the "privacy lobby".

Supporters of civil liberties must unite behind all efforts to challenge the Ford Administration's crimes against constitutional rights such as the FBI's brazen attempt to disrupt the YSA convention and the SWP presidential campaign rally.