

Collusion of Press in Roeshman Kidnapping

PHILADELPHIA, August 2 (IPS) — While the House of Representatives is rewriting the Constitution to establish the independence of Federal police agencies from control by the President and the executive branch, CIA-controlled FBI, Federal and state law enforcement officials, and press are engaged in a clear-cut conspiracy to aid, abet and cover up the kidnapping and attempted brainwashing of 19-year-old Gail Roeshman, a member of the National Caucus of Labor Committees.

Newspapers and the Federal authorities have collaborated in refusing to treat the outrageous continued imprisonment of Gail Roeshman as a crime, although under Federal and state law it is just that — Gail is legally an adult.

Moreover, much of the newspaper coverage on the case has been devoted to libeling the Labor Committees suggesting that wholesale violation of federal and state laws was a perfectly proper way of dealing with Labor Committee members, who were consistently portrayed as victims of a religious cult.

History of the Case

Miss Roeshman was abducted by her parents July 18 and held for brainwashing by convicted abductor Ted Patrick, the well-publicized self-styled “deprogrammer” of “Jesus freaks.” Since that time Miss Roeshman has been moved periodically from state to state in an effort to prevent her from resuming her association with the Labor Committees.

Gail's Testimony

The Labor Committees are in possession of a notarized affidavit signed by Miss Roeshman and dated June 18, one month before the kidnapping, in which she describes her father's insistence that she visit his psychiatrist Dr. Herbert Lustig. The affidavit recounts Dr. Lustig's attempt to convince Gail that her political organizing was responsible for her father's severe emotional disturbance. The affidavit notes the psychiatrist's affiliation with Lincoln Hospital in New York City, site of the Lincoln Detoxification Center where the Black Liberation Army terrorist countergang was created [see IPS No. 6]. In the affidavit Miss Roeshman gives clear indication that her father might take desperate action to prevent her from organizing with the Labor Committees.

Since the abduction the National Caucus of Labor Committees has received four letters from Miss Roeshman, all of which state that she is being held against her

will. One relates the deprogramming attempted by Patrick, whom Gail refers to as “scum.”

In the most recent letter, dated July 24 and received July 30, Gail writes “Do not try to get me, I am being watched. I've (and you've) got FBI, Philadelphia Cop Fencl, State Police, etc. watching us.”

Hard Evidence Ignored in Slanders

Despite this hard evidence of unlawful imprisonment and violation of civil rights, carried out with the complicity of the FBI, newspaper stories on the case have so far avoided the key issue of FBI involvement, nor have they printed any statement by the FBI or the U.S. Attorney's office in Philadelphia on their manifest refusal to enforce the law.

Instead, in general, the press has followed the slander line laid down by the *New York Times*, against which the Labor Committee has filed a \$10 million libel suit, for its July 27 article on the Roeshman case. [See IPS this issue for details.] The next issue of IPS will carry a report on the unfortunate career of Paul Montgomery, the *Times* reporter responsible for the libelous article.

AP Checks With Control, Kills Story

Aside from outright libel, the only course acceptable to the CIA was that taken by the Associated Press, which blacked out this major national news story completely! July 30 an IPS representative in New York called AP reporter Jack Stokes, who spent half an hour taking down verbatim Miss Roeshman's letter of July 24 along with a full IPS statement on the case. Stokes then began to check his files for the *Times* story and the stories carried in Philadelphia papers.

The following morning three calls from IPS to AP were switched back and forth from desk to desk before a man on the Bureau Desk, who repeatedly refused to identify himself, barked “No, we're not running it.” When pressed to explain this decision, he said “I don't have to tell you why” and hung up.

UPI and Reuters endorsed the AP brand of journalism and also refused to cover the case.

This behavior coming from AP was no surprise, as AP reporter Tom Crane told the Labor Committee in May that all AP stories on the NCLC were cleared with Walter Kirby of the New York Police Intelligence Division. (AP and Crane covered up the attempted assassination of a Labor Party organizer by brainwashed Black Liberation Army zombies at the Lincoln Detox Center in May.)

The "Cult" Ploy

The libel tactic was exemplified by Carole Rich of the *Philadelphia Bulletin* whose July 28 story on the kidnapping quoted entire paragraphs from the *Times* article — without attribution. Written exclusively from the point of view of the kidnapers, the article contained extensive quotations from the girl's deranged father and Ted Patrick. Its intention was to portray the Labor Committees as a religious cult of the Charles Manson variety:

"Patrick said the techniques used by religious and political cults to convert followers are a 'combination of extrasensory perception [ESP], hypnosis and brain — washing.' He said cult members will convert others by 'looking into their eyes and using mind control so that you don't know you're being hypnotized'."

In the *Philadelphia Inquirer* of the same day, Andrew Wallace "objectively" printed the same Patrick falsehoods and fantasies, while ignoring Labor Committee briefings:

"This girl would kill her parents if the leaders told her to She had been brainwashed and hypnotized, like the peoples of China or the followers of Manson and Hitler'."

The next day the *Inquirer* under the byline of Judith Kinnard printed an extensive account of the kidnapping operation itself, as witnessed and aided by a neighbor of the Roeshmans. The article plainly revealed that Gail was taken and held by force, even noting that private security guards were hired for the occasion. Yet the story made no comment on the blatantly criminal nature of these actions, nor did it include any description of the actual political program and activity of the Labor Committees, a characteristic it shared with the earlier articles.

Another Patty Hearst...

A slightly different angle was pursued by the *Philadelphia Daily News*, which, while omitting evidence of Federal complicity, did present a reasonably objective account of the case by bourgeois standards. However, its July 30 and August 1 articles alike were laden with sob-sister rhetoric of the "Poor Patty Hearst" genre. "Yearbook Notes to Rebel's Quotes" wailed one headline, focusing attention on the question "How did a nice girl like her get mixed up with a bunch of socialists?" Or, as reporter Pat Smith put it, "Neighbors of the Roeshmans didn't know yesterday how Gail found herself trapped between two worlds."

Press Impressed By Liberals' Alarm

The tone of press coverage changed markedly when the executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union's Philadelphia Chapter, Spencer Coxe, pointed out what IPS had been telling reporters from the outset: That the FBI and the Philadelphia U.S. Attorney's office

were refusing to act on what Coxe called "a prima facie case that a serious crime has been committed by the parents and Ted Patrick."

This mild statement on the essentials of the case was picked up by the same stout-hearted reporters who previously had taken at face value, apparently, the fabrications of Federal officials that Gail was a minor and therefore could be legally kidnapped her parents. The press, however, failed to cover the finding of last year's ACLU report on Patrick, which strongly suggested that he had the cooperation of Federal authorities in his adventures in "deprogramming."

That judgment was completely borne out in the Roeshman case.

Federal Complicity

FBI agent John Blair, who identified himself as in charge of agents on the case in Philadelphia, was questioned by an NCLC representative as to why his office was unable to investigate and make arrests when the kidnapers had been identified openly as Gail's parents and neighbors and Patrick in numerous Philadelphia newspaper articles. Blair replied that newspapers were full of lies and distortions: "You should know that, you print enough of them"! When the NCLC representative then asked if Blair was refusing to investigate a Federal crime, he replied, "We will not proceed with an investigation until ordered to do so by the U.S. Attorney's office. Now I know you'll misquote me."

At the U.S. Attorney's office, Federal law initially appeared to receive slightly more respect — Assistant U.S. Attorney Batty, supposedly in charge of the case, declared he didn't know anything about the kidnapping laws and asked for leading cases. After he was given the citations and an explanation, he said, "Oh well, I understand everything you said but I wouldn't want to commit myself."

When pushed further, Batty contended that he could do nothing without the approval of U.S. Attorney General Curran, who would not be back in his office until Monday, August 5, and that Curran had already given his approval for this course of non-action. A call to Curran's secretary exposed that lie; she said Curran would be in his office the next day.

In order to remind these public servants of their Constitutional duty to uphold the laws, an attorney representing the NCLC thereupon sent U.S. Attorney Curran a letter detailing the Federal kidnapping and civil rights laws being violated and pointing out that Gail was legally an adult in all three states where she appears to have been imprisoned. Along with a phone call to Curran made by another attorney, phone calls from workers, civil libertarians, and press pressured Curran into agreeing to meet with an attorney for the NCLC the morning of August 2.

Since that agreement was reached, however, at least one concerned citizen who contacted Federal authorities about the case has been told, "We don't plan to do anything about it. It's strictly a family affair."

Calls to the FBI and U.S. Attorney's office in Miami, where Gail is reportedly being held, elicited a similar runaround.

Court Order

August 2, the Labor Committees obtained a show cause order in a Philadelphia Federal court which requires that Gail's parents and Patrick appear in Philadelphia August 6 to explain why they should not be enjoined by the courts from further violations of Gail's

civil rights. But if the FBI and prosecutor's office stonewall and refuse to bring in the criminals, freeing Gail Roeshman will depend on bringing further massive political pressure to bear.

If the President and the executive branch no longer have the authority to control Federal police, if Congress is enshrining the police agencies as a law unto themselves, if Federal prosecutors and police refuse to perform their duty to enforce the law and Federal courts are powerless, to whom should workers and other citizens turn to defend themselves against outright police repression? Obviously not to the fearless "investigative reporters" of the bourgeois press.

Foreign Press On Watergate

August 5 (IPS) — The stepped-up offensive of the Rockefeller pro-impeachment forces in Congress has been complemented by allied forces in the Rockefeller-controlled foreign press. Especially in Italy and Great Britain, where Rockefeller's interests are well entrenched, the press has been used not only to organize the domestic population to accept the chaos and confusion of a watergated U.S., but actually to float rumors which would be highly suspect from an American press source.

The Soviet press, on the other hand, has been careful to avoid drawing any conclusions which might damage the Soviets' detente dreams, consistently referring to Watergate as "the so-called Watergate Affair."

British Rumor Mill

The *London Times*, *Telegraph* and *Express*, the three leading bourgeois British dailies, have conducted a growing psy-war rumor campaign against Nixon over the past week, picking up on the Judiciary Committee's steamrolling impeachment vote. The August 2 *Express* headline blared "Nixon May Quit in Deal" and reported that a "frazzled" President will soon make a resignation deal with Congress and Vice President Ford. The *Telegraph* echoes the theme, mooting the inevitability of Ford's accession to the Presidency.

The *London Times*, speaking directly for the Rockefeller forces, makes the point clear. August 1 the *Times* reports that "sources" believe Nixon will be out of office by Christmas, that Ford will then be President and will consider nominating Nelson Rockefeller, Barry

Goldwater, or Elliot Richardson, in order, as Vice President!

The Italian Angle

La Stampa, the Italian daily controlled by FIAT owner Agnelli, has been a reliable tool of the Watergaters since the Watergate conspiracy's inception. Of late, however, *La Stampa* Washington correspondent Vittorio Zucconi has honed in on the real story behind Watergate and "confused" *La Stampa's* readers with columns which directly contradict the paper's editorial line. Last week a guest editorial by A. Rouchey, an ex-editor of *La Stampa*, recommended that should Nixon survive the impeachment proceedings somehow he ought to resign anyway! Yet Zucconi commented cautiously July 31: "Outside the substance of the charges, one could say that the discovery that the king is naked [and] the shattering of the myth of the sacredness of the Presidency has generated the desire for overkill in the Congressmen."

Soviet Silence

The Soviets, desperate to avoid any embarrassment which might jeopardize the now dissipating "winds of detente," have been generally tight-lipped about Watergate. Last year's suggestion that Watergate was a conspiracy by rightwing forces to sabotage detente has not been repeated. Now infrequent reports simply indicate briefly that impeachment is underway without explaining what this impeachment is. Similarly, Nixon's press statements accusing the press of distorting the "so-called" Watergate Affair are published verbatim — without comment.