

Dow raiders keep it up in DC jails

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Washington

Although locked behind bars of District of Columbia prisons, the DC Nine, who last week wrecked the Washington offices of the Dow Chemical Co., continue to attack Dow and other U.S. corporations. Jailed immediately after their arrest, they refused to eat, called on U.S. bishops and church authorities to end the church's complicity in murder and imperialism, and asked their friends to act with them against U.S. domination of the world.

On March 22, the nine destroyed Dow office machinery and furniture and heaved files onto the streets below for public scrutiny. Their action raises the level of militancy against Dow and makes more explicit Dow's role in international military and economic aggression. More than just an attack on Dow's napalm production, the nine charge Dow and other U.S. corporations with perpetrating imperialism by their very existence (see the "Open Letter," below).

Movement moves

The lackadaisical DC movement quickly moved to back the DC Nine's action. Still talking, more than a week later, of the documentation of the nine's charges against Dow in the files sprawled on the streets, a new support committee organized a candlelight march to Dow on March 23, picketed the Dow offices at lunch hour every day last week, and held evening rallies at the Women's Detention Center, where Sister Joanne Malone of St. Louis and Mrs. Catherine Melville of San Francisco are jailed.

Dow files included correspondence with Congressmen about financial contributions, gifts of products, plane trips and vacations and showed specific instances of corporate influence over

legislation. Dow's plans for subsidiaries in Brazil, Korea, Chile and other nations, plus friendly communications with CIA and U.S. embassy personnel in these countries, were found. Some of the documents found on the street were sent to the Guardian.

Dow officials claimed there was no incriminating correspondence in their Washington office, but those who rummaged through the avalanche of files wonder what is contained in correspondence Dow feels is incriminating if they think these papers were not.

The action was well planned with tight security precautions. The press was notified in advance to meet "for a big story" at mid-afternoon on March 22 at an address in the northeast section of the city. From there they were instructed to go to the lobby of the Washington Post in the northwest area and await further instructions.

In an action that almost destroyed the plans for their lookout to signal when the sidewalk was clear, Post assistant city editor Bart Barnes evicted the press-TV cameras and Associated Press photographer included. He claimed, "There are some shadowy characters here and we can't have them blocking our doorway." These "shadowy characters" included the Post's black staff reporter, Bob Hinton. After the action, Barnes took the story away from Hinton, who had fought to be allowed to cover it.

Window broken

At 5:30 one of the DC Nine broke through Dow's fourth-floor window and files began to clutter the streets of downtown Washington. Herbert Garcia, supervisor of the Federal Detective Agency, which guards the building, said the nine had rung a trouble bell for the building's furnace system, then ran upstairs when building guards went to investigate the 17th floor furnace. They gained entry by smashing a side window of the office door.

About 15 minutes later, police arrived at the office suite with revolvers drawn. The nine, including two women and seven men, were led to paddy wagons singing "The Battle Hymn of the Republic."

The nine are: Rev. Bernard E. Meyer and Rev. Robert T. Begin (who were arrested in Cleveland in January for taking over a cathedral to give a sermon on racism, peace and poverty); Rev. Joseph F. O'Rourke and Rev. Michael R. Dougherty of Woodstock, Md.; Sister Joanne Malone; Rev. Dennis Maloney and

Michael Slaski of Detroit; and Rev. Arthur Melville and Mrs. Melville. Melville is the brother of Thomas Melville, who was evicted from Guatemala in 1967 for aiding revolutionaries and was one of the Catonsville Nine who destroyed draft files in Catonsville, Md., last spring. The DC Nine were charged with second-degree burglary and destruction of property and are being held on \$1000 bail each. Their hearing is set for April 2.

On their own

The theory behind the DC Nine's action is an indication of their faith in people's ability to respond to injustice. At the time of their action, they had no help from the DC movement, had no lawyer, no bail money and no local support. They were from other cities, but were convinced that this act would stimulate an otherwise inactive movement here to pull itself together not only in their defense, but in following the lead of their action.

In a jail interview, Arthur Melville said, "Possibly our action might be an aid to others in making a decision to risk themselves in acting for justice." Friends said that the Catonsville Nine's action last year sparked the growth of a solid movement in Baltimore and that the DC Nine hope similar direct action and mobilized support around it will begin to solidify and strengthen movements in many cities.

Checks for bail and defense made out to the DC Defense Committee can be sent to Ann Speltz, 1620 S St. N.W. Washington, D.C.

As the Guardian went to press, word arrived that the DC Nine had been released from jail—the women late March 28, the men March 29. Guardian Baltimore correspondent Dee Ann Pappas reported that bond was posted by Teamster Union Local 630.