SHACHTMANITE PLOT?

THE *DAILY WORLD* AND *WORKERS VANGUARD* TAKE ON THE MARCUSITES
It should come as no great surprise that after the NCLC’s “Operation Mop-Up” attacks on the American Communist Party in the spring of 1973, the CPUSA argued that the NCLC was backed by shadowy “dark forces” linked to sinister elements inside the U.S. government.

But just who were those dark forces?

During the height of the Labor Committee attacks, the *Daily World* published an article by Donna Ristorucci entitled “‘NCLC’: Ruthless attack from the racist Right Wing.” Claiming it was wrong to view the conflict between the CP and the NCLC simply as a nasty spat between two leftist groups, she argued:

The “NCLC” was expelled from the Students for a Democratic Society for supporting the 1968 teachers’ strike against the Black community. That strike was led by Albert Shanker, president of the United Federation of Teachers, whom the “NCLC” still supports.

Since then, “NCLC” has consistently exposed its own racism by organizing against anti-racial demands such as special job training and hiring programs for Black youth, special college admissions programs for Black youth and similar demands aimed at compensating for hundreds of years of racial discrimination. (Emphasis added.)

Ristorucci aimed to link the NCLC to objections by many Social Democrats against strictly race-based “affirmative action” programs and hiring quotas. She then argues:

Their main ideologist Lyn Marcus (a pseudonym) reportedly teaches at Columbia University under the guidance of Zbigniew Brzezinski, former intelligence agent for the U.S. State Department and “specialist” in Eastern Europe and Communist affairs.

Exactly how did Ristorucci figure out LaRouche was “reportedly” involved with Brzezinski? LaRouche had taught his Marxist Economics class in different locations at Columbia, such as Hamilton Hall, but never as a member of the Columbia faculty. In the fall/winter of 1972, he lectured at night in a classroom at Columbia’s School of International Affairs (SIA), a room that Columbia student members of the Labor Committee had obtained permission to use from school officials. That was as close as LaRouche ever got to Brzezinski. Here again the *Daily World* sought to convince gullible readers, of whom the *Daily World* had more than a few, that LaRouche was part of some dark conspiracy. It is also possible, of course, that Ristorucci was herself as gullible as her readers and believed her own conspiracy theory.

More interestingly, Ristorucci concludes her article:

There is also evidence that the “NCLC” is connected with Jay Lovestone, the infamous ex-Communist turned CIA agent specializing in international labor
relations. This would explain NCLC’s support for the most reactionary, corrupt, racist labor leaders and their policies and their repeated attacks on progressive teachers and rank and file organizations, particularly Black caucuses.

As late as 1975, the CP still tried to link the Labor Committee to Albert Shanker, Jay Lovestone, and the CIA. In a special Daily World supplement from September 1975 entitled “Phony ‘Labor’ Party Exposed as CIA Front,” one article states:

Racist views of the NCLC were expressed from its earliest beginnings. As one of its first campaigns, the group supported the campaign of Albert Shanker, head of the United Federation of Teachers, against community control of schools in the black community.

Another article from the same packet angrily protested a Wall Street Journal story depicting the NCLC as a new communist grouping. The CP was particularly upset because the author of the article, James Hyatt, reported on rumors that the NCLC may have received indirect Soviet support. From the Daily World:

The WSJ, which prides itself on accuracy, also changed the date of the NCLC’s founding. That is significant, because last December 30, the New York Times reported that CIA officials told Watergate investigators that Nixon’s [sic] “dirty tricks” operation had penetrated the Students for a Democratic Society group at Columbia University in 1968, soon after the Columbia strike.\(^1\) Everyone in the left could tell the WSJ that this was when and where the NCLC was formed. Despite this, the WSJ claims the NCLC was formed a year earlier in an effort to obscure the obvious connections between the NCLC and the CIA.

First and most obvious, the Nixon “dirty tricks” operation could not have existed in 1968, since Nixon was only elected president that November and he didn’t take the oath of office until late January 1969. The only known relationship a government intelligence agency had to the Labor Committee at Columbia came in the form of an FBI COINTELPRO leaflet (“The Mouse Crap Revolution”) that mocked Labor Committee leader Tony Papert and praised Mark Rudd. And while it is true that the group did adopt the name “N.Y. SDS Labor Committee” in the wake of the Columbia strike, as the WSJ accurately reported, it had been an independent political tendency since at least late 1967 or early 1968.\(^2\)

GEORGE MORRIS EXPLAINS IT ALL

The CP’s claim that the NCLC enjoyed some special relationship with sinister dark forces traces back at least to 1971. On 19 October 1971, Daily World Labor Editor George Morris published an article that absurdly claimed that the NCLC “are actually a handful of anarchist elements who broke away from the now defunct Students for a Democratic Society (SDS).” Morris complained that “anarchist elements” like the NCLC, the Workers League, and the Progressive Labor Party, though claiming to be ultra-
revolutionary, never attack “the most reactionary labor leaders like those in [George] Meany’s circle.” The “ringleaders” of such sects, Morris charged,

are clearly getting encouragement from very reactionary sources – as employer agencies, police, FBI, CIA or any of the other instruments for disruption and division of the progressive sectors of the working class movement. . . . What else can you say of groups that make those who move forward their major target? What else can you say of a group like the “Labor Committee” that seems to have ample funds to saturate every demonstration with printed leaflets? The clear object of the “Labor Committee” is to disperse and confuse every manifestation of progress. . . . This is not a “revolutionary” group: it is a counter-revolutionary conspiracy and should be known as such.

What is most interesting about the Morris column is what provoked it in the first place, namely a rally where the Labor Committee issued leaflets critical of John Lindsay. A January-February 1970 comment on Lindsay in a Campaigner article entitled “The Return of the Pop Front” summed up the group’s view this way:

The Lindsay government is by far the best example of what the future holds. Lindsay was re-elected through the support of left-liberal layers of the middle class, ghetto “militants” and their OEO and foundation-funded local control machinery, and finally due to the support of the largest “socialist” political apparatus in the country today – the CP with its remaining trade unions and Reform clubs. Lindsay’s record? Attempts to bust at least four unions, near liquidation of the city’s hospital system, drastic cuts in welfare and education budgets. This is the hero of the New Democracy.

Morris reports on “a labor rally for peace and against the wage freeze and racism held in the New York garment center.” The rally was addressed by “a considerable section of the New York labor movement” as well as Emil Mazey, secretary-treasurer of the United Auto Workers. Mayor Lindsay also addressed the crowd:

It was, as the Mayor observed, an advanced step because it brought together a substantial labor group in action for peace, a refutation of the claim of the George Meanys that they speak for labor in support of the Indochina war. . . . When the Mayor was introduced, a score of these disrupters by obvious pre-arrangement appeared to heckle him.

Leaving unresolved the metaphysical distinction between appearing to heckle as opposed to actually heckling, Morris continues:

The question was not whether there is ground for criticizing the Mayor on a number of issues. In this case, he came as a powerful voice for an end of the war and aligned himself with a peace movement that of necessity must be broad
enough to include people like the Mayor. The group calls itself “National Caucus of Labor Committees.”

To fully appreciate Morris’s article, it must be understood that the appearance of Lindsay on a stage with a leading member of the UAW at a rally that also included David Livingston, the head of District 65, was not insignificant. The top leadership of the American labor movement had been deeply divided over the war in Vietnam. The fact that Morris penned the attack is equally noteworthy. Born in 1903 in the Ukraine, Morris was one of the founding members of the American Communist Party. He served for years as the Daily World’s labor correspondent and “expert” on fighting “right-wing” social democrats and “Trotskyite elements.” In 1945, for example, he penned The Trotskyite 5th Column in the Labor Movement. In 1967 Morris published CIA and American Labor; the Subversion of the AFL-CIO's Foreign Policy; in 1976 he issued a 60-page follow-up text entitled Social Democrats – USA, in the service of reaction: a record of racism, low wages, bureaucracy and betrayal of socialism.

JAY LOVESTONE, MAX SHACHTMAN, AND THE “AFL-CIA”

To understand why the CP was convinced that the Labor Committee must be some kind of right-wing Social Democratic/CIA creation, it is necessary to know something about Jay Lovestone and Max Shachtman, both of whom played significant roles inside the organized labor movement in the middle of the 20th century.

A leading member of the American Communist Party in the 1920s, Jay Lovestone broke with the Moscow and its allies after Stalin began his bid for total power. Lovestone now sided with the “Right Opposition” leader Nicolai Bukharin. After leaving the CP with a small band of supporters, Lovestone began working with the AFL to cripple CP organizing inside the trade-union movement. After World War II, Lovestone and the AFL-CIO aided trade unionists around the world opposed to Moscow. Lovestone also began working closely with top officials from the newly formed CIA -- and James Angleton in particular. By 1963 Lovestone ran the AFL-CIO’s International Affairs Department (IAD).³

In the mid-1950s another former long time radical named Max Shachtman abandoned Trotskyism and led his Workers Party/International Socialist League (ISL) into Norman Thomas’s Socialist Party (SP).⁴ Members of the ISL’s youth group now helped rejuvenate the SP’s Young People’s Socialist League (YPSL). Shachtman’s supporters became especially strong in the UFT. The union was led by former YPSL member Albert Shanker, who hired Shachtman’s wife Yetta Barsh as his secretary. By the mid-1960s, the more hawkish wing of the SP (supported by Shachtman) strenuously supported the war in Vietnam. In the early 1970s, the SP “right” reorganized itself as Social Democrats USA (SDUSA); its leaders included New America editor Paul Feldman.
SDUSA began in 1972 after Shachtman appealed to members of the Democratic Socialist Federation (DSF) to join the SP. The DSF, in turn, had been a faction inside the Social Democratic Federation (SDF) – a group that split from the SP in 1936 and was known as the “Old Guard.” In 1956 the Social Democratic Federation formally reunited with the SP. However a splinter group, the Democratic Socialist Federation – which included the SP’s old Yiddish language federation – opposed the merger and formed an independent sect. After the DSF leadership followed Shachtman’s advice, the merger gave birth to the SP-DSF, soon renamed SDUSA.

Although closely identified with the Democratic Party, SDUSA refused to support George McGovern in the 1972 elections, above all because of McGovern’s dovish views on foreign policy. Many SDUSA members became prominent “neo-con” supporters of Ronald Reagan. Thanks to the support of the Reagan Administration and Democrats with close AFL-CIO ties, in 1984 a leading SDUSA member named Carl Gershman became the head of the newly-created National Endowment for Democracy (NED). SDUSA stalwart Tom Kahn took a job as AFL-CIO head Lane Kirkland’s international labor advisor, a post he inherited from Irving Brown, one of Jay Lovestone’s closest aides.

During the 1968 UFT crisis, Tom Kahn served as co-chairman with Michael Harrington of the Ad Hoc Defense Committee to Defend the Right to Teach and chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee for Justice in the Schools, two groups that defended due process for teachers in Ocean Hill-Brownsville. That same year, Kahn ghost-wrote speeches for Hubert Humphrey, the Democratic candidate for President. Carl Gershman also wrote regularly for New America and covered the debate over the UFT strike in the liberal New York left for the journal. One of Gershman’s articles appeared in the 22 January 1969 issue of New America along with Tony Papert’s article on SDS.

To make the politics of this period even more complicated, just a year before the UFT strike, Israel and its Arab foes fought the June 1967 war, a conflict that enormously polarized the Left. After 1967, many New Leftists denounced Israel and glorified Palestinian airplane hijackers as Third World heroes. This turn against Israel fueled Second International opposition to Moscow and the New Left. Under such conditions, it seems not entirely impossible that a group like the Labor Committee might well have received some support from the Socialist International. Paul Feldman’s call for donations to the Fraser-Borghmann Defense Committee raised just this spectre.

For many reasons, then, the CP may have kept a close watch on the New York Labor Committee starting as far back as September 1968. Is it possible then that the CP encountered Myron Neisloss? As I show in a separate appendix, Myron Neisloss may have acted as a “bagman” of sorts to the early Labor Committee from the Social Democrats and their shadier friends in government. Clearly the Daily World stories
show that the CP believed that some special relationship between the Labor Committee and the CP’s Social Democratic arch enemy had continued into the 1970s. Even if the CP was wrong, the *Daily World*’s fear of a deeper conspiracy was by no means completely irrational.

**THE VIEW FROM THE TROTSKYIST LEFT**

The conviction that the Labor Committee was best described as some kind of Social Democratic formation was held not just by the Communist Party but by both the Spartacist League and the Workers League. The difference between the CP and the Trotskyists was that the Communist Party invented a conspiracy theory to explain the NCLC, while the Trotskyists traced the NCLC’s actions to LaRouche’s “Left Shachtmanite” politics, compounded by his “crackpot” personality.

In February 1972 the Spartacist League (SL) paper *Workers Vanguard* published the first of a two-part series on the Labor Committee entitled “Crackpot Social Democracy.” The SL argued that the Labor Committee functioned as a left apologist for trade-union bureaucrats. According to the Spartacist League, the NCLC seeks to fill the vacuum created by the complete discrediting of traditional American social democracy. Ten years ago, young political activists who thought in terms of supporting strikes in cooperation with the local union bureaucracy, of pressure groups designed to expand medical care for the poor or to maintain rent control, joined the Young People’s Socialist League or the early anti-communist SDS.

However, the blatant chauvinism of the trade union bureaucrats revealed by their slavish support to the Vietnam War and the disclosure that the liberal anti-communist front groups favored by Norman Thomas and Co. were funded by the CIA completely discredited these forces. This left a clear field for political formations not tainted by McCarthyism and the stultifying Cold War atmosphere of the Fifties but catering to the same reformist impulses. By terming a student-based propaganda campaign to oppose a transit fare increase a “proto-Soviet,” Marcus seeks to give a revolutionary façade to the kind of politics traditionally associated with the Democratic Party and “socialists” of the Norman Thomas-Bayard Rustin brand. Mirroring the New Left’s contempt for organized labor, the Labor Committee performs an essential task of all social-democratic ideologues – providing an excuse for the conservative politics and sellouts of the union bureaucracy by arguing that they simply reflect the backwardness of the workers and the inherent limitations of unions as social institutions.

After a long quote from the NCLC’s 1971 *Strategy for Socialism* document arguing against the CP policy of “boring from within,” the Spartacist League continues: “Michael Harrington or Irving Howe couldn’t have said it better, including the attack on reds
(‘professional insurgents’) as irresponsible, unrealistic, hopelessly isolated elements in the unions.”

*Workers Vanguard* cites a passage from an article entitled “Trade Unions Today” in the Spring 1971 *Campaigner* to prove its point: “Any rank-and-file grouping which assumes power in his [the “bureaucrats”] stead would be forced to more-or-less similar practices because of the ordinary petty conservatism and backwardness of the average union member.” The Spartacist League writer then comments: “The position is clear: the workers get the leadership they deserve!” In their October 1968 pamphlet on the New York City Teachers’ Strike, LaRouche and Papert made this exact same argument about Albert Shanker’s role as UFT president and the Spartacist League never forgot it. For the Spartacist League, LaRouche was not a Leninist revolutionary but a social democratic reformist. To cite the title of a December 1971 Spartacist leaflet: “The Poverty of Marcusism: Portrait of a Utopian-Reformist Charlatan.”

A few years earlier in a 16 December 1968 *Bulletin* article, “Many Theories of L. Marcus,” Workers League leader Tim Wohlforth concluded that LaRouche was a social democratic reformist guru. He argued that the NCLC’s national employment policy to create some four million new productive jobs was a “transitional program” meant to reform capitalism – not overthrow it. “Marcus is clearly a man of another era. How happy he would have been in the old FDR brain trust.” Since the NCLC advances “reform demands limited by the existing capitalist structure, in no way does Marcus differ on this question” from Karl Kautsky or Ernst Mandel. Even worse is the idea that one can use “the capitalist corporate income-tax system for our own purposes in our own way.” Wohlforth comments: “never before has a single man compressed into such a short statement so much revisionism. Like Khrushchev and Brezhnev, LaRouche ignores the challenge of the violent seizure of state power for the path of a chimerical ‘peaceful road to socialism.’”

Equally criminal, LaRouche ignored the central issue of “the party.” Yet revolutionaries need a party and not the fun kind. The party that is demanded must be one that is “conscious, disciplined, yes, disciplined, particularly and harshly and cohesively disciplined. We are speaking of a Leninist party.” In contrast, “Marcus’s programmatic understandingly demands of him that he organize a loose propaganda group which he hopes someday will lead to an ever looser mass organization which will have confidence in L. Marcus’s ability to administer the Federal Reserve System.” For LaRouche, the party is just “a cadre grouping of revolutionary intellectuals.” But such a group will only import pragmatism and bourgeois false consciousness into the workers’ movement.

On 9 March 1972, a debate was scheduled between Tony Papert and Joseph Seymour for the Spartacist League. Before the debate, the Spartacist League devoted two long
articles in the February and March issues of *Workers Vanguard* to a polemic against the NCLC. ⁶ Here are some excerpts:

The “National Caucus of Labor Committees” of Lyn Marcus, known for its apocalyptic visions and schemes for instant socialism, has become something of a New Left fad. . . . Marcus’s positive appeal, apart from his dependence on prevailing ignorance, stems from a particular amalgam of New Left Utopian ideas and impulses within traditional social-democratic reformism. . . .

What the Labor Committee shares with the New Left world-view is the belief that revolution is easy and instant if one could just find the new gimmick, tactic, posture, propaganda line or organizational form that will bring American bourgeois society tumbling down like the walls of Jericho. Marcus’s position that the devaluation of the dollar marks the collapse of the capitalist system; Wohlforth’s assertion that the Attica uprising means “the revolution has begun”; Charles Reich’s claim that the U.S. revolution is already taking place in the hearts of its youth – all represent typical idealist projection of one’s own desires onto reality. On the organizational level, the Labor Committee’s “proto-soviets,” the Workers League’s November 12 “general strike” and the Weatherpeople’s terrorism are all aspects of the frenzied petty bourgeois “revolutionary” make believe.

Comparing the NCLC with the French Utopian Socialists, the article argues that the two major currents of nineteenth century Utopian socialism were technocracy and consumerism. Technocracy (Saint-Simon) maintains that the fundamental problems of society can be solved by allowing production to be rationally guided by scientists, engineers and the like. Consumerism (Proudhon) held that the fundamental issues of social conflict are lowering rents, taxes, and interest and expanding government-provided services. Technocracy raised the technically trained petty bourgeoisie above all social classes, while consumerism made an amalgam between the petty bourgeoisie and other classes, particularly the industrial proletariat.

Marcusism is a remarkably pure amalgam of Saint-Simon and Proudhon, including the latter’s fixation with money, befitting a failing shopkeeper. Marcus’s attacks on union parochialism and his pseudo-Hegelian terminology are employed in a sustained attack on the leading role of the industrial proletariat in the socialist revolution. Everything Marcus writes on this subject has but one purpose: to dissolve the working class into some broader social category which explicitly includes the lumpen proletariat and the petty bourgeoisie, particularly the intelligentsia.

However, some of the SL’s most interesting comments came during Operation Mop-Up, when *Workers Vanguard* published excerpts from LaRouche’s crazy internal psychological documents. A 27 April *WV* article -- “Scientology for Social Democrats” – noted that LaRouche’s “crackpotist side” had now reached
truly bizarre proportions. Long marked by one of the most grotesque leader cults among the petty-bourgeois radical organizations, the Labor Committee has now run right off the rails as Marcus’s self-inflating posturing reaches new heights which can only be termed mystical, and perhaps downright clinical.

Part of the problem was that LaRouche was guilty of thinking more like a Shachtmanite and less like a Bolshevik: “Marcus himself was, of course, always something of an eccentric, with a strong tendency toward petty-bourgeois personalism.” But the roots of his madness lay in his affinity with Shachtmanite thinking: “The elevation of bourgeois moralism and personalism above a class analysis was one of the reasons why Trotsky termed the Shachtmanites the ‘petty-bourgeois opposition’ in the SWP.” The article then claims:

it is, in fact, the fundamental philosophical tenet of the petty-bourgeoisie to examine social phenomena from the standpoint of the individual and not the class. This flaw drove the Mensheviks into the arms of the White Guard, James Burnham to join *National Review*, Shachtman’s uninterrupted evolution toward and into the rabidly pro-imperialist “Socialist Party” and for Marcus’s path, apparently, into raving lunacy.

*Workers Vanguard* continued to document the NCLC’s descent into madness throughout the summer. From an 8 June 1973 Spartacist League analysis of the NCLC national conference:

Marcus, despite his unequalled expertise in the production of non-fulfilling prophecies, remains unflappable in stating exact dates for his crackpot schemes, perhaps because, like Tim Wohlforth of the Workers League, he and his organization of petty-bourgeois academics manqués always have available as last line of defense the spurious employment of Marxist contradiction to prove that black is white.

**CONCLUSION**

From very different points of view, then, both the CP and the Trotskyist sects whose leaders knew LaRouche personally viewed the Labor Committee as a Social Democratic Shachtmanite-like sect. The Communist Party ascribed this behavior to outside “dark forces,” while the Spartacist League and Workers League viewed the NCLC as a “left social democratic” formation led by an eccentric. It seems likely, then, that both the CP and the Trotskyists came to somewhat similar conclusions based in part on the SDS Labor Committee’s conduct during the 1968 UFT strike, even though the Spartacist League and Workers League supported the UTF.

But what did the real Shachtmanites think about all this? SDUSA maintained a considerable interest in the NCLC well into the 1980s. During this time, SDUSA maintained strong links to the old League for Industrial Democracy as well. In 1982, LID
sponsored Dennis King’s pamphlet *Nazis without Swastikas: The Lyndon LaRouche Cult and its War on American Labor*. In the mid-1980s, former PL-SDS member King served as editor-in-chief of *New America*, the same journal that published former PL-SDS member Tony Papert’s analysis of SDS in January 1969.

**RESEARCH NOTE: THE DAILY WORLD READS THE NEW YORK TIMES**

Perhaps the most curious reference in the 1975 *Daily World* supplement attacking the Labor Committee is to the *New York Times*:

The *WSJ*, which prides itself on accuracy, also changed the date of the NCLC’s founding. That is significant, because last December 30, the *New York Times* reported that CIA officials told Watergate investigators that Nixon’s [sic] “dirty tricks” operation had penetrated the Students for a Democratic Society group at Columbia University in 1968, soon after the Columbia strike. Everyone in the left could tell the *WSJ* that this was when and where the NCLC was formed. Despite this, the *WSJ* claims the NCLC was formed a year earlier in an effort to obscure the obvious connections between the NCLC and the CIA.

Technically speaking, the National Caucus of SDS Labor Committees was founded in Philadelphia in March 1969. The CP was correct, however, if one dates the origins of the group as an independent faction inside Regional NY SDS, since the Marcusite NY SDS Labor Committee began operating under that name sometime in early June 1968 or “soon after the Columbia Strike” and Tony Papert’s formal expulsion from PL.

More importantly, the *Daily World* article claims that a 30 December 1974 *New York Times* article reported that CIA officials told “Watergate investigators” that the CIA had penetrated Columbia SDS.

Not a word of this is true.

Some background: On 22 December 1974, reporter Seymour Hersh published a front page story in the *New York Times* that claimed that the CIA had engaged in a massive illegal domestic spy operation that included the surveillance of anti-war and radical groups.⁷ One of the revelations involved a CIA operation (now known by its codename, MH/CHAOS) that spied on New Leftists.

In 2011 a former CIA agent named Frank Rafalko wrote a book highly critical of Hersh’s claims.⁸ Rafalko said that MH/CHAOS began in 1967 after President Johnson tasked the CIA to determine whether or not foreign governments controlled the peace movement.⁹ CIA officers concentrated on New Leftists who visited Communist Bloc nations and met with obvious intelligence officials. They tracked meetings of New Leftists with Cuban Intelligence (DGI) officers who operated out of the Cuban Mission to
the UN. The CIA sent a few agents into extremist groups to acquire “radical credentials” so that the operative could later penetrate foreign targets. These agents passed on any information they received while “building their cover.”

After Hersh published his article, the New York Times was contacted by an unidentified source who claimed he had spied on radicals at Columbia University. On 29 December 1974, the Times ran a story by Hersh entitled “Underground for the CIA in New York: An Ex-Agent Tells of Spying on Students.” This is undoubtedly the article the 1975 Daily World article references, even though the story appeared in the Times on 29 December and not 30 December.

Hersh said that his source first contacted him shortly after the publication of the 22 December expose. The source told Hersh that the CIA’s Domestic Operations Division began spying on domestic dissidents in 1967, the same year MH/CHAOS went into action, even though MH/CHAOS was separate from the CIA’s Domestic Operations Division.

Be that as it may, the source claimed that “more than 25 CIA agents were assigned to the city at the height of anti-war activity at Columbia University and elsewhere.” As for Columbia, the source said:

“The first actual [physical] surveillance came when people like Mark Rudd started moving around. . . . We’d go out, take some photographs, and follow them . . . We had different I.D.’s for paper I.D.’s or flash a badge and say we were a reporter for a magazine – it made things a lot easier. . . . If something happened in New York City, you couldn’t say you were an A.P. or New York Times reporter. We’d usually use Newsweek. Atlantic Monthly was another good cover – no one ever heard of it.” He also said the Domestic Operations Division ordered psychological profiles of Rudd “and others we felt were not just idealistic kids. And then we started wondering where the money was from. . . . My theory and my belief is that much of the money was coming from the Soviet KGB.”

The source stated that the CIA wanted to infiltrate agents into radical groups and “turn somebody around” to spy on others. But it was tough: “I could never identify myself as a CIA man. . . . I always had to be a student or whatever I felt like at the time. You couldn’t say you were a cop because you might be talking to a cop.” The source then said to Hersh: “These kids were directly involved with foreign stuff . . . We always worried about drugs from Communist China, KGB agents, and foreign guns. That’s what gave us the right to come in.” He added, “We were interested in the kids who were training” select cadres in New York before sending them to other cities:

“It seemed that New York was a big training ground for cells in other cities. . . . If we felt that a person was working for an agency not to our liking,” he or she
became a suspect and “any organization that advocated the overthrow of the Constitution became a very hot target for us.”

After the troubles at Columbia, the source said “he was given an opportunity to infiltrate a local chapter of Students for a Democratic Society”: “I had no qualms when I was asked. . . . In a way I thought it was almost a promotion. . . . I went undercover for four and a half months. . . . I wouldn’t want to live like that again.” After bombings and other violent disturbances, the life of an undercover agent “got scary.” He also recalled:

“Suppose we had two infiltrators in the Rudd group and we got a call saying there was trouble. We’d set up a commo [communications] van nearby, with the commo gear and some weapons. [The van also included photographs of the infiltration for easy spotting.] . . . Everyone then had a different job. The back-up people would join the pro-Rudd forces at the demonstration, so now you had people all around Rudd. Their job would be to watch in case something went wrong so they would be able to pull out the infiltrators [who were always CIA agents]. The others would take photographs. We reported to the van, and I assume that the intelligence was put together there and sent to the New York office and then on to Washington.”

Whether one believes Hersh’s source or not, one thing is clear: the Daily World tried to use these claims to accuse the Labor Committee of being a CIA creation. Yet the article focuses exclusively on the “Rudd group” in Columbia SDS, the same group that maintained regular contacts with East Bloc and Cuban sources.

In a way, one almost hopes the source told the truth. After all, Mark Rudd was a National Office protégé who spent weeks in early 1968 being feted in Havana. He then emerged in the summer and fall of 1968 as a leading promoter of domestic guerrilla warfare and terrorism along Guevarist “foco” lines. His SDS National Office/proto-Weatherman friends met regularly with Cuban intelligence agents and went on freebie junkets to Eastern Europe. In contrast, the Labor Committee had no outside foreign connections, much less Cuban and East Bloc tour guides. Therefore it would make sense that the CIA might well try to infiltrate agents into the Rudd/National Office circle for many reasons, not the least of which was the fact that the CIA had been tasked by President Johnson to try to determine the anti-war movement’s links to foreign intelligence.12

The Daily World, then, tried to use an article in the 29 December New York Times about an anonymous source’s claim that the Mark Rudd wing of New York SDS was targeted by the CIA to support a claim that the Labor Committee somehow had been conjured up by Langley after the Columbia strike – and that proof for this assertion came from testimony from “CIA officials” speaking to “Watergate investigators” as documented in the pages of the 30 December 1974 issue of The New York Times!
Yet the fake *Times* story must have worn out its welcome because on 10 January 1976, *Daily World* “LaRouche expert” and CPUSA Politburo member Mike Zagarell wrote a front page story that began: “William Colby, director of the CIA, has admitted that his agency is giving $50,000 annually to the so-called National Caucus of Labor Committees, two West German newspapers disclosed.”

13 The two papers who ran the hoax were the West German Communist Party (DKP) paper *Unsere Zeit* and *Die Tat*, the paper of the Communist-Party dominated VVN (Union of Persecutees by the Nazi Regime (*Vereinigung der Verfolgten des Naziregimes*).

*Plus ça change . . . *

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1 For more on this claim, see the research note at the end of this appendix.

2 The SDS Transit Project was proposed in late 1967 at the Princeton SDS meeting. The first *Campaigner* came out in February 1968. If one counts CIPA, the Labor Committee tendency dated back to sometime in 1966-67.


4 Shachtman’s name is commonly misspelled “Schachtman.”


7 See [http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB222/index.htm](http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB222/index.htm).


9 The CIA concluded that the peace movement was not controlled by any foreign government, a view that the FBI’s William Sullivan supported.

10 In one of fringe history’s strange coincidences, Labor Committee critic Dennis King said that his one time close collaborator Bruce Bailey knew Hersch’s source. King had been a member of PLP’s Upper West Side chapter at the time of the Columbia strike and he attended meetings at Columbia’s Summer Liberation School. Another attendee was Bailey, a tenant organizer who later worked closely with King.

From Columbia SDS member Bob Friedman’s blog Sundial: Columbia SDS Memories:

> The Liberation School was located between Broadway and Amsterdam Ave. in a Columbia fraternity house on W.114th St. The Columbia Strike Committee had sublet the frat house for the summer. Initially, many people attended Liberation School classes in the afternoon and in the evening. But by the middle of July, only a small number of people were hanging out around there, or attending classes there, on a regular basis. . . . *An older guy in his early 30s, who was dressed in a suit and tie and was named Bruce, first appeared around the Movement at this time. He attended a class on Columbia’s housing polices and*
started to participate in SDS strategic debate at the Liberation School. Bruce helped start the Columbia Tenants Union around this time and, as the head of the Columbia Tenants Union he became a thorn in Columbia University’s side for many years, before he was found murdered over 20 years later. (Emphasis added.)

This was Bruce Bailey.

In 1975, King, Bailey, and the well-known tenant activist Maria Runyon helped organize a meeting to expose the CIA’s presence in Morningside Heights. From a 10 February 1975 Columbia Spectator article available at http://spec-archive.library.cornell.edu/cgi-bin/columbia?a=d&d=cs19750210-01.2.3&srpos=&dliv=none&st=1&e=-----en-20--1--txt-IN-%2211th%22----

Runyon To Probe Local CIA Ties
By JOEL BENNETT

Assemblywoman Marie Runyon (D-70th A.D.) will hold a one day public hearing on March 1 to investigate reported allegations that Morningside Heights was the scene of illegal domestic surveillance by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) between 1968 and 1971. Dennis King, an aide to the assemblywoman who is organizing the hearing, said yesterday that the investigation comes in response to charges made in the New York Times that the CIA engaged in spying on college students in New York City. The Times story, by Seymour Hersh, appeared on Dec. 29. Hersh reported that a former CIA agent had told him that as many as 25 CIA agents had operated covertly in metropolitan universities after 1968.

King said that the final details of the hearing, including the participants on the investigating panel, have not yet been decided. However, he said that President McGill has been invited to testify at the hearing. The President was unavailable for comment last night. Hersh wrote that "New York City became a prime CIA domestic spying target during the late nineteen-sixties because it was considered a 'big training ground' for radical activities in the United States." However, the Times never linked CIA spying to any Columbia students or professors.

Based on the findings of the commission, Runyon intends to draft a bill to present in Albany, providing for statewide protection of citizens against surveillance. Runyon has also made a commitment to persuade other legislators to support similar legislation. The investigating commission is expected to invite civil liberties lawyers, former government agents and political activists to testify. In addition, spokesmen for the CIA and the FBI will be invited. According to Runyon, an invitation has also been sent to the former chief of CIA counterintelligence James Angleton, although he is not expected to appear. President McGill has been invited due to fears on the part of the organizers of the investigation that CIA activities may have jeopardized the academic freedom of the university. The March 1 hearing will be held in the Riverside Church from 1-4 p.m. (Emphasis added.)


On Both Sides of the Bench
A Hectic Weekend for Marie Runyon
By RICK MacARTHUR

Deftly switching roles from defendant to interrogator in a scant two days, local assemblywoman Marie Runyon (D-70th A.D.) spent a hectic weekend in Manhattan. Returning to the city after a week in the State Assembly in Albany, Runyon spent Thursday morning at the Criminal Courts Building downtown, answering criminal charges against her, Saturday afternoon chairing a "grass-roots" hearing investigating
alleged CIA spying on Morningside Heights, and Sunday evening attending a reception in her honor at the home of Judge Bruce Wright. Wright was recently transferred to the Civil Courts, after charges that he allowed violent criminals to go free on minimal bail, as a Criminal Court judge.

Runyon's busy schedule began on Thursday, when the first-term legislator appeared in Manhattan Criminal Court, where she faces charges for obstructing the eviction of a Columbia Tenants Union member from a building owned by Jewish Theological Seminary. An aide said the outspoken Runyon wants "to get this (trial) over with as fast as possible." However, Lewis Steele, Runyon's lawyer, said that crowded court schedules forced a March 20 trial date. Saturday it was off to Riverside Church for an ad-hoc committee hearing organized by Runyon to investigate alleged CIA intelligence operations in Morningside Heights. The four-hour session, attended by about 90 people, got off to a serious start with a report from Martin Stolar, an attorney for the Attica Defense team, who outlined circumstantial evidence of CIA activity in the area. Stolar claimed he had evidence to confirm the existence of a New York City Police Department "Red Squad" which conducts intelligence gathering in New York. However, he admitted, "We have no evidence from the New York Police Department that the CIA and the Red Squad work together."

Members of the panel included foreign policy expert Morton Halperin, Runyon aide Bruce Bailey, several clergymen, and other community leaders. William Johnston of the Episcopalian South African Churchmen, testifying after Stolar, said he could "hand the committee no smoking gun" as evidence of CIA spying on the Heights. But he then proceeded to explain in detail the "insidious" relationship between the United States and South Africa. Edward Goldman, a former Columbia activist and a Marxist, spoke at length about his trip in 1972 to the People's Republic of China and CIA harassment on the trip. After describing indirect harassment he had experienced on the West Side, Goldman admitted he had not heard of any of his other friends receiving similar treatment. Then, in one of the more confusing moments of the inquiry, Bailey read aloud an anonymous letter corroborating Goldman's testimony. The three following witnesses all admitted they had no hard evidence of CIA activity on the Heights. A member of the White Lightning Collective, however, delivered a eulogy to the deceased Dr. Richard Taft of the Lincoln Detoxification Clinic in the Bronx, whom he claimed was murdered by methadone interest groups. The CIA, the representative claimed, is participating in a depopulation campaign through drug distribution similar to the one in Manchuria, China in the 1930's.

At the Sunday reception for the West Side-Harlem Coalition in Wright's West Side apartment, Runyon relaxed after her weekend's activities. She said she was "pleased" with the results of the CIA hearing, and hoped to hold more hearings so she could eventually introduce legislation on the CIA issue.

Dennis King wrote to the Spectator to protest its coverage. See Columbia Daily Spectator, Volume XCIX, Number 81, 6 March 1975 — FEEDBACK Poor Coverage of Hearing at http://spectatorarchive.library.columbia.edu/cgi-bin/columbia?a=d&d=cs19750306-01.2.20&srpos=&dli=none&st=1&e=-----197-en-20--13--txt-IN-orientation--51-1000-1975

FEEDBACK

Poor Coverage of Hearing

To the Editor: Your coverage (March 3) of the first public hearing of the Morningside Heights Commission to Investigate the CIA left much to be desired. First, your reporter claimed that Attica Defense lawyer Martin Stolar, a key witness, denied any evidence of a connection between the New York City Red Squad and the CIA. In fact, Martin Stolar pointed out that the Red Squad has received training from the CIA (a well-substantiated charge).
Second, your reporter ignored the hard, evidence presented by researcher Don Donahue of direct past and present links between Columbia trustees, administrators and professors with the CIA. Third, you neglected to even mention the key testimony pertaining to government surveillance and harassment in our community (the Commission was interested not just in direct CIA involvement, but also in FBI, and Red Squad actions).

For instance:

The Socialist Workers’ Party (West Side branch) presented a careful description of nine instances of government harassment against members of their party who were participating in local electoral activity.

Postal worker Harry Fishman presented a summary of his FBI, dossier, which he received from the U.S. Civil Service Commission, including hard evidence of more than 50 cases of FBI surveillance of community radical groups (and also of two non-political groups, a social club and a civic improvement association).

The author of this letter presented documentary evidence of Columbia University organization and funding (under former President Andrew Cordier) of a classic agent provocateur group which was used to commit acts of physical violence against the Columbia Tenants’ Union and the 112th Street squatters.

Edward Goldman did not just give an example of “indirect harassment” but of agent provocateurs trying to sell him guns and drugs which is about as direct as you can get.

William Johnson of the Episcopalian Churchmen of South Africa did not just talk about the relationship between the U.S. and South Africa but also presented evidence regarding a break-in at the National Council of Churches (475 Riverside Drive) by government agents at a time when the NCC was on President Nixon’s list of organizations to be harassed. The seriousness of Johnson’s charge was confirmed by panelist Father Robert Chapman, who at the time of the break-in had been a top official of the NCC.

The author of this letter testified to an attempt by the CIA’s "Kaplan Foundation" to approach him with an offer of funding – In the midst of the community’s fight against Columbia expansion and urban renewal in 1968.

CTU chairman Bruce Bailey testified as to a conversation he had in 1968, as a welfare worker, with a young white welfare client who claimed to be working for the CIA. The description of local C.I.A. work remarkably paralleled the description later given in the New York Times (1974) by Seymour Hersh’s informant. The young man told Mr. Bailey that he had been assigned to build his "cover" in order to wangle an invitation to visit Cuba with the Venceremos Brigade. Mr. Bailey later confirmed that the young man did eventually go on a Venceremos Brigade trip to Cuba.

The March 1 hearing of the Morningside Commission was only an initial hearing designed to furnish leads for further investigation in open and closed sessions. Only a fraction of the important leads furnished were actually presented as evidence at the hearing.

Dennis King (Mr. King organized and served as research director for the first Commission hearing.) (Emphasis added.)
Did Bailey meet Hersh’s source? And, if so, was the source a CIA agent? After all, what kind of trained CIA agent is it who tells a welfare worker that he is a member of the CIA?

Hersh did write a Times story on 30 December entitled “Three More Aides Quit in CIA Shakeup,” a follow-up piece showing the impact of his 24 December expose.

By 1973-74 the NCLC developed its own conspiracy theory about Weatherman. The NCLC argued that Weatherman was a CIA-sponsored dangle designed to feed the East Bloc selected disinformation as well as to entrap the Cubans and others into associating with terrorists. The CIA would later expose this link to heat up the Cold War and discredit detente. While this argument may have limited merit, I think it is almost impossible to believe that Cuban and Soviet intelligence was that naïve.

On Zagarell’s position inside the CPUSA, see Harvey Klehr, Far Left of Center (New York: Anti-Defamation League, 1988), 11.