

# Defend the French Students Free Alain Krivine End Gaullist Repression

## Committee to Defend the French Students

As the revolutionary upsurge of May and June, 1968, in France subsides, if even for a short period of time, the Gaullist government is utilizing the opportunity to try and rid itself of some of its most conscious opponents. The vanguard of the student movement, which played such a crucial role in the events of May and June has come under increasing attack, and more than a dozen students are now awaiting trials that could result in two year prison terms for each.

While the American press provided substantial information about the activities of May and June in France, they have said little about the repression that has followed and the protest campaign that has been mounted against the repression.

On June 12 the de Gaulle government ordered the dissolution of seven left-wing student organizations, digging out of government archives for this purpose a law passed in 1936, which banned fascist organizations that set up private militias. The government implied that the monitor squads organized by left wing student groups to direct demonstrations during May and June, constituted a "private militia."

At the same time they banned all street demonstrations during the period of the general elections. This ban has subsequently been extended and is still in force.

The following day, on June 13, four additional adult organizations were added to the list of organizations which were officially dissolved. Head-

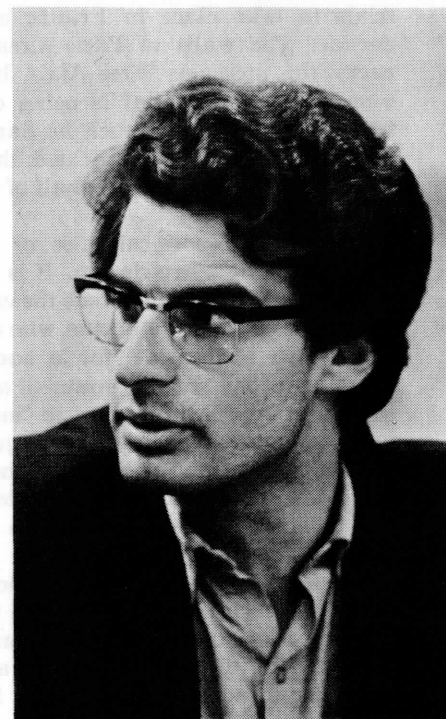
quarters and apartments of leading members of the various organizations were searched by the police, and many individuals were taken into custody and held for 3 to 10 days, incommunicado, and without being charged.

Parallel to this campaign of intimidation and repression against the French vanguard, dozens of foreign students and journalists were picked up and deported from the country. For students from countries like Iran, Spain, Portugal and many others, this often entailed immediate arrest by the political police of their own countries as soon as they arrived.

On July 10 the next phase of the repression began. Paris police broke up a meeting of a Student Worker Commission in Paris; 41 were taken into custody; and five were held for charges. The police held that the meeting was really a meeting of the banned JCR, Revolutionary Communist Youth, since former members of the JCR were present. The five students held were charged with "reconstituting the JCR."

In the following few weeks, a total of 15 students were arrested in various parts of France, including Brest, Rouen and Strasbourg, and held on charges of "reconstituting the JCR." Among the 15 were Alain Krivine, one of the central leaders of the student movement and a leader of the JCR, and Pierre Rousset, also a JCR leader and the son of a prominent left-Gaullist deputy.

The response from individuals and organizations concerned about civil liberties was immediate. Several de-



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fense committees were constituted; prominent intellectuals such as Jean-Paul Sartre and Laurent Schwartz, spoke out against the arrest of the former JCR members and helped initiate the defense efforts; defense leaflets were printed and distributed; and help was solicited from organizations and individuals around the world.

All 15 of the former JCR members were held in Paris jails from the time they were arrested until August 23, when mounting international protests against the repression forced the government to grant "provisional liberty," a status similar to being free on bail. However, the charges against them have not been dropped, the trials are still pending, probably in September.

They are to be tried in a special State Security Court set up after the Algerian War to try French army officers who led the OAS, the ultra-right wing terrorist organization opposed to independence for Algeria. The judges in this court, a large number of whom are military judges, are directly under the control of the de Gaulle cabinet, and can be removed or changed by the cabinet. There may be no opportunity of appeal.

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Already the furor over these impending trials indicates that they may well be the most important political

trials to take place in France in a decade. The walls of Paris already carry the message "Free Alain Krivine;" defense material is being distributed; and figures such as Sartre and Schwartz have indicated their willingness to testify on behalf of the defense at the trials.

Clearly, the political lines of the September trials are drawn. It is the de Gaulle government versus the vanguard of the French students, who are being held responsible for a social convulsion beyond the power of any organization or individual to "instigate" or "plot." If the de Gaulle government succeeds in victimizing these first 15 it will be prompted to extend and intensify the repression with renewed vigor.

A defense campaign of international scope is crucially important in the fight to protect the rights of the French students. De Gaulle's undemocratic and illegal actions against the left in France must not go unchallenged. De Gaulle is wrong if he thinks he can "ban" the movement for social change in France.

Time is short and help is needed to get the word out here in the United States. If you can help, contact the Committee to Defend the French Students.

The Committee to Defend the French Students has been formed to publicize the repression throughout the United States and defend its victims. The committee asks support for its four demands:

1. Immediate lifting of the bans on all proscribed political organizations.
2. Immediate release of Alain Krivine and all other political prisoners.
3. Reaffirmation by the French government of the right of free access for all foreign journalists so that the rest of the world may know the truth about the situation in France.
4. An immediate end to the brutal police repression of demonstrations and other attacks on civil liberties of the French people.

clip and mail to .....

Committee to Defend the French Students  
c/o Helena Hermes, National Secretary  
148 W. 16th St., New York, N. Y. 10011

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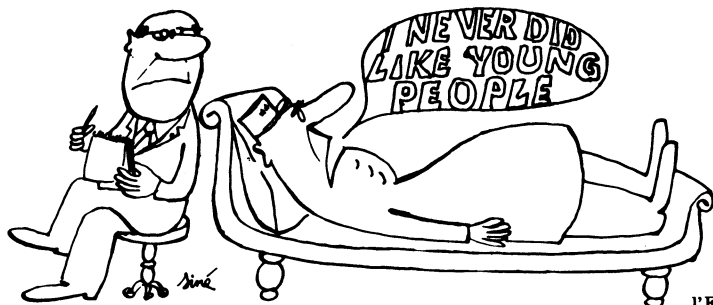
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