

## INTRODUCTION

This Training Manual is an important step in moving toward our own courts and toward control of our own institutions. It is intended to provide us with an analysis and perspective on the campaign to elect our own Judge.

This work reflects our commitment to a serious understanding of the process that we are collectively engaged in. We are jointly about the business of developing a competent and solid political base comprised of people who share a vision of building a more humane and rational society. We can and are consciously taking affirmative steps towards these objectives through our political education and political work.

Our campaign is different from other electoral campaigns. We understand that the struggle for fundamental changes in this society is a power struggle that is long and difficult. We have already, successfully, demonstrated our commitment to real work.

This Training Manual is an example of that work. All of us in the campaign, dedicated to the task of organizing and persuading the people of this City, can and will enhance our work skills by learning, thoroughly, the contents of this Manual.

WORK...WIN!  
WORK...WIN!!  
VICTORY IN NOVEMBER!!!  
1972!!!!  
1973!!!!!!

This Training Manual was put together and written by the members of "RAG," The Research and Analysis Group of the Campaign.

## WHY THE ELECTORAL PROCESS?

Justin Ravitz, like many of us, is a progressive person who believes that fundamental changes are necessary in this society. His history includes participation in the Wayne County Jail suit which reduced the number of inhabitants in that institution, the STRESS suit which exposed the murder squad of the Detroit Police Department, and the James Johnson case which pointed out the exploitation of black people and poor people working in the Chrysler Eldon Avenue plant. These successes lead one to legitimately ask, "Why, then, since Justin is doing so well in the field of litigation, is he entering the electoral field?"

For one thing, we (Justin) can and will win. What is not clear for many of us is what winning means: what is to be won, how does that winning reflect past activities, how can this victory aid in making the fundamental changes that we feel are necessary for the betterment of our everyday lives?

In order to answer these questions, one must first understand the notion of power. All the victories mentioned in the first paragraph illustrate some use of power: we had the power to reduce the number of people in the Wayne County Jail, to expose STRESS, to keep James Johnson from life imprisonment. We did NOT, however, force the Wayne County Jail to cease to exist, we did NOT make the DPD less racist, we did NOT alter the conditions of black people and poor people at Eldon Avenue. At this point in time we do not have the power to do all the things that we would like to do. Amassing that kind of power means building organizations and institutions that enable us to utilize our perspective to the fullest advantage.

Justin's judgeship is one step in the building of that kind of power. It allows us to elect a judge to Recorder's Court; a judge in an institution that has some control over our lives. Justin, by his candidacy, has already begun the process of suggesting alternatives to other candidates and judges, such as 24-hour arraignments. This is one step in bringing us closer to the reality of "people's courts."

What is more, Justin's past record has proven to us that he is one who truly acts in the best interest of those he professes to serve; he is a "people's candidate," which means he will represent the real interests of the majority of us -- black and white, young and old, men and women -- who in one form or another are material victims of a system of lawless laws. We realize that we can neither litigate nor vote our way to liberation. But, we can engage in struggle on both these fronts and on many others, all the while organizing for power, organizing for liberation.

This campaign is one form of that organization for power, a form that allows us to go to areas of Detroit that we have not previously entered, a form that allows us to both concretely measure and systematically consolidate our power.

Our candidacy, however, is objectively different than others. Most candidates have no real campaign machinery, while others consist of principally political hacks and those with monied interests alone. What we have is a campaign where people volunteer to stand in the rain up to 13 hours--not because they are paid, but because they know it is in their best interest to get Justin Ravitz elected to Recorder's Court. People know him, they know his work, they trust him, and they understand that he is not going to "sell them out" when he gets in office.

Not only that, but our campaign offers opportunity for other efforts and other "successes." It allows us to develop a strategy for discussions with people that voted heavily for George Wallace in the Presidential Primary--people who registered through that vote a dissatisfaction with the way things are but saw few acceptable alternatives offered to them. Wallace supporters are racists, to be sure; but they are also in the main oppressed workers. We must struggle for class solidarity, and to achieve this we must overcome the carefully nurtured divisions along race lines. Black and white campaign workers are consciously and politically combatting the racial contradictions.

Simultaneously, while we are building new relationships and extending our parameters of influence, those of us who have not had organizing experiences in the past are allowed, through the process of the campaign, to begin on a new level: to hold "coffee," to engage people in discussion, to enhance our understanding of others and to bring to those others our own understandings.

In short, the process of Justin's campaign is one that is open-ended. We know by our victory on August 8 that we are indeed a force in the City of Detroit. The campaign is meant to put that force to work not just in the courts, but in other areas and in areas other than the electoral one.

THE FUNCTION OF THE LAW IN AMERICAN SOCIETY

It should be very clear that this subject matter is well beyond the realistic scope of this brief Training Manual. The manner in which the law is used as a tool to maintain social control and to preserve the interests, power and property of one class (those who own and benefit from the ownership of the means of production) in opposition to the interests of others (all of us) is complicated, to be sure, and not sufficiently addressed by the space provided here. We have, however, taken an approach that does integrate and simplify the oppression of their law & order & injustice.

The following excerpts from the life of Mr. or Ms. X bears, at numerous junctures, sufficient correlation with reality so as not to be entirely fictional.

"So I finally got this gig, but it was way across town and I was spendin' hours trying to get to and from work on their public transportation system. I decided to spring for a ride and hooked up with this car dealer and finance company. The chevy was okay except it didn't work so well and I guess now that I think about it most the money went to these folks who live on that estate outside Detroit and not to the workers who like made that car, you know. Anyway, before I got past my 90 day probation period, the company laid me off and the union couldn't do nothin about it, you know. It seems GM, for whom I happened to work, was relocating some production in South Africa where people, I guess they're treated like slaves even more than we are, would do the work for less wages. Then some "bailiff" came out and they repossessed my ride and I got some notice to go to Common Pleas Court, or somethin, but I didn't have no money, couldn't pay them anyway, didn't have a lawyer so I never made it to Court. I started drawing unemployment, as soon as I could--and that was really a hassle--and then I was able to get this other job out at Peerless Cement. The job wasn't too good and the foul air really got to me, but at least I didn't have to live in that area where alot of the homeowners, some of whom I spoke to, were really trapped. Then one day they told me a default judgment had been entered on the car case and they started garnisheeing my wages. I got pretty depressed. I had hurt my back too, but the compnay doctor told me I had to work and that I couldn't get workmens compensation. Anyway, I missed a few days and got fired. I couldn't get back on welfare right away; we were broke; the kids were hungry. And so one day I tried to rip off some food from A & P and got arrested. They held me in a precinct lockup for about 48 hours and then took me to Court. I had been in trouble once before and missed a court date cause I hadn't received notice on it so they set a \$500 bond which I couldn't pay so I got locked up in the Wayne County Jail with some pretty messed up people. There was this young drug addict goin thru withdrawal, and I tell you it was awful. So then I went to Court and I had this State lawyer....."

## I. Why Run for Judge?

A. A number of friendly people have genuinely asked "why" and suggested that Justin's proven effectiveness as a people's lawyer could not be matched as a judge. The answers, in addition to the value of the entering the electoral process (discussed later) are two-fold:

1. There are a number of competent people's lawyers with whom Justin has worked for years and they are capable of carrying on that struggle. As you know, there are not a number of people's judges!

### 2. What can be done as a Judge?

a. 30,000 defendants go thru the Court each year. As 1 of 20 judges, Justin will mathematically handle something like 1,500 cases a year.

b. Also important, in addition to providing justice in 1,500 cases is providing a new atmosphere in at least one courtroom. There is a reason why judges sit up high, wear robes, require people to stand, bow, say your Honor: it instills fear and intimidation for everyone--including victims and non-party witnesses. When people (defendants) are afraid, they are less willing to struggle or assert their rights. Part of having "our own Courts" is not being afraid in them. Justin can, with real limitations, begin to offer the new atmosphere.

c. The bench is heterogeneous and contains some real decent people--e.g., John Murphy, Robert Evans. Someone with leadership and vision can both provide a model for the better people on the bench and can organize for important internal changes such as 24 hour arraignments (discussed later). This is INTERNAL work.

d. The Judges make some decisions at their meetings which materially hurt us all--for example, electing Joseph A. Gillis as Presiding Judge; initiating the "Philadelphia Plan" which is designed to coerce more speedy guilty pleas (plead guilty when we first offer it to you or we won't offer it again and you'll be unable to cop a plea later to a lesser offense)--yet the Judges never criticize their "colleagues" and bring these important public questions to the attention of the people. Justin will do this--thru the media and thru maintaining constant contact speaking to people thruout this City. This is EXTERNAL work.

e. For some of the wrong reasons, the "office" itself allows one to speak with a "louder voice." Justin has had alot of effective media exposure in the past; he will continue to have this and it will be enhanced by the office he holds. Here too we all can have a real model as to how public officers should genuinely serve the people to whom they are responsible.

## II. BUT, Remember the Limitations!

We must remain realistic and not exaggerate what 1 judge can accomplish. The point is fairly obvious. The

criminal court itself is reactive in the sense that as an institution it responds to already committed crimes. It cannot rectify the conditions of life in this country which cause and perpetuate crime! Furthermore, the Court is but one of the 7 arms of the "criminal justice system," the others being: the police; bail bondsmen; jailers; prosecutors; lawyers; and prisons. Some, the judge can and will seek to control, monitor and influence. But there are real limitations.

### III. The Other Six Arms of the Criminal Justice Institutions

#### A. The Money Bail System--(or the RANSOM system of CHECKBOOK JUSTICE!)

1. The sole purpose of bail is to insure a defendant's presence at trial. It is not supposed to be used to punish people "presumed to innocent" nor is it to be used against the poor as a means of preventive detention. But, it is a gross example of just that: poor people go to the Wayne County Jail while rich people (when charged) go free! A \$100 bond for an indigent is preventive detention!

2. 90% of all Wayne County Jail inmates are indigents. During the jailsuit it was proven that 1/3rd of the inmates (400 of 1200 at that time) were being held simply because they could not pay the 10% bond premium, + collateral, on a \$1500 bond or less--that is they could not pay \$150 or less.

3. Bail bondsmen profit and grow rich off of human misery. They perform no real societal purpose. The 10% premium they take is non-refundable. They run a riskless business---insured in Detroit by collateral (property like real estate) posted by the defendant in the amount of the bond and underwritten also in New York by an insurance co. At most, they remind people to come in (something decent attorneys or administrators could do) and search for and kidnap those who don't show.

a. They have a powerful lobby in Lansing. Years ago Mich. passed a law like Illinois' allowing defendants to post the 10% with the Court (instead of bondsmen) and if acquitted 100% would be returned, if convicted 90% would be refunded. It was in Mich., tho, confined to misdemeanors, the object being to see if it worked and then extend it to felonies. It works fine! It's never been extended to felonies. Legislators are politicians, to whose campaign coffers bondsmen contribute.

b. Bondsmen contribute generously to Judges' electoral campaigns (lunches & dinners too--it's a club). Judges set bonds thus repaying bondsmen. Clinton Street bar lawyers hang out at bondsmen's offices where their friendly bondsmen hustle cases for them. Lawyers hustling in Courts return the favor, referring the family to their friendly bondsmen.

\*\*\_OUR Position: Get rid of the vulturistic bondsmen; offer alternatives other than money for the conditional release of poor people; do NOT make money a condition for release when the mere lack of money will be the cause for detention in the barbaric Wayne County Jail!

B. The Wayne County Jail

1. Virtually everyone in the jail is awaiting trial, is "presumed to be innocent," is not therefore to be punished, and the only purpose of bail (or pre-trial detention for those not released on bail) is to insure one's appearance at trial.

2. The conditions are worse in the Wayne County Jail than in any prison! People (who are innocent) plead guilty just to get out of the WCJ! Everyone in the WCJ is subjected to maximum security detention, which means:

a. 24 hour lockup on single wards containing from 4 to about 15 eight by ten foot cages (with toilets overflowing, sinks that don't work, mattresses or 1/2 mattresses that stink and are never cleaned, rats, filth & vermin, in a building that is structurally decadent and without any ventilation or means of controlling the wretched, stinking foul air!) and with a small, barred in "rock area" or, in the new side a very narrow pathway or "catwalk" running along the front of the cages.

b. There is no recreational activity in the jail whatsoever, though by court order a tiny little room has been ordered to be made into a rec room that obviously can accomodate no more than a handful of inmates.

c. No ONE is allowed to ever even touch the hand of a spouse, parent, child or loved one. Visitation is allowed but once every two weeks through a little glass window over telephones that are admittedly bugged! (The system creates conditions that cause sexual assaults and then when they take place those who control this system justify the degradation they impose by pointing out how these "presumably innocent" people, jailed simply because they cannot afford the price of ransom bail, are "animals.")

d. The Wayne County Jail kills people and those who allow it to continue are murderers. Harold Cross, a black college student with no record held on a traffic court offense of possession of a knife over 3 inches (which boys scouts can carry) and held because a funny-looking, punk traffic court referee & judge thought Cross looked funny and imposed a \$500 bond, was sexually assaulted and murdered in the Jail by persons on a ward that mixed traffic offenders, murderers and rapists. This was in June, but a few days after Florence Patterson (who the press never told you about) died in the Jail, where the Administration called it a "suicide" though actually she died in that foul-aired joint due to an asthma attack. They knew and had been told she was an asthmatic. They murdered her just as they murdered James Grubbs, an epileptic charged, I think, with vagrancy who kept falling out, cutting his head open, being sent to the pauper's hospital (Detroit General) stitched up and returned. 30 men on his ward, before he died, protested the inhumanity of again returning Grubbs to the ward. The goon squad threw all 30 men in the infamous hole---upto 10 men per 8 by 10 foot hole-- as a disciplinary measure; threw Grubbs into 24 hour isolation lockup on Ward 712 (the "mental ward" tho they had no psychiatrist!) and Grubbs died there, that night in 712!

24-HOUR ARRAIGNMENTS ON ALL  
CHARGES

In 1971, according to Detroit Police Department statistics, 114,139 people were arrested and taken to police precincts. Lock-up conditions in police precincts are worse than the Wayne County Jail!

We take the position that citizens arrested in Detroit should be taken immediately to Court, day or night, to see if there are grounds for the arrest. If the arrest is lawful, bond should then be set immediately by a judge. If not, then the person should be released. In a city this size, with judges paid \$34,000 a year, people subject to arrest are entitled to 24-hour arraignments.

Look at the statistics, provided for us by the 1971 Detroit Police Department Report and the 1971 Recorder's Court Report:

<u>ARRESTS:</u>		<u>TAKEN TO COURT (prosecuted)</u>	
Misdemeanor	48,666	Traffic Court	16,159
Felony	<u>65,473</u>	Recorder's Court ( Misdemeanor)	16,284
Total arrests	<u>114,139</u>	Felonies	<u>14,295</u>
		Total	<u>46,738</u>

FALSE ARRESTS:

Total arrests	114,139
Less prosecutions	<u>46,738</u>
Total false arrests (not prosecuted)	<u>67,401</u>

Justice is committed to 24-hour arraignments and judges have the power (and the responsibility) to initiate this system. It would greatly decrease the number of false arrests and false imprisonments; it would prevent many people from being held in

barbaric jail lock-ups, some of whom thereby lose their jobs;  
rather  
it would free police to fight crime/than commit crime; and finally,  
because there would be fewer false arrests, it would help to  
reduce a meaningful and deserved basis for citizen distrust of  
the police.

A CITATION OR SUMMONS SYSTEM FOR  
NONVIOLENT MISDEMEANOR OFFENSES

The above chart shows 48,666 misdemeanor arrests in 1971,  
and obviously the great majority were for non-violent, misdemeanor  
offenses. Thousands of police man hours were expended for the  
alleged  
transporting, booking and detaining of these/misdemeanants.  
Additionally, in Detroit and throughout the country, the major  
make  
explosions have been precipitated by police trying to/arrests on  
minor misdemeanors. For example, the blind pig raid of July 23,  
1967.

While a Recorder's Court Judge does not have the power to  
alter this policy, someone speaking as a judge (along with ourselves)  
can agitate and persuasively push for such an important and  
rational policy change.

\*\* OUR Position:

a. A constitutional "detention center" (not jail) would provide maximum security on the outside to prevent escapes and maximum openness and freedom on the inside so as not to punish people not convicted of anything and presumed innocent. There should be adequate medical, mental and dental care; edible food; exercise and recreational facilities; access to free phones and private visiting rooms.

b. Because there is no such constitutional facility in Detroit, Ravitz will be most reluctant to "sentence" anyone prior to their trial to the punishment inflicted by the 24 hour government crime of the WCJ. When he cuts people loose who he would detain if a legal and constitutional facility were available, Justin will make this fact publicly known.

(1) We all should realize that the present Judges have cut thousands of people loose for this very reason, but because they do not deem themselves responsible to the public, they have carefully shielded this fact. In Nov. of 1970 there were 1,600 people crammed in the WCJ (build for less than 800) and 2-3 inhabited each 8 by 10 foot cage; in Jan., 1971 when the jail suit began, there were 1,200+ in the WCJ; today, there are, at all times, less than 600 in the WCJ. That was the major benefit of the jailsuit!