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## And now it's you, Mrs. Robinson . . .

by Corydon Ireland  
City Editor

On July 14, 1967, Arto Williams entered the Afro-Asian Bookstore, 1412 Jefferson Avenue. He approached Martin Sostre, the proprietor, at the counter.

"Are you in business?"

"Yes," Sostre replied.

Williams then said he handed \$15 to Sostre, who gave it to Geraldine Robinson to count.

"It's all here," she purportedly said.

Sostre left the room for a few minutes, Williams relates, and returned with a "bag". Williams took the bag and left.

Just outside the store, Det. Sgt. Alvin Gristmacher took an envelope from Williams which contained a white powdery substance. (Gristmacher had given the money to Williams, who is a former police informer.) The white powder was later analyzed and reacted positively in a "Narcotics test." it was heroin.

### Sostre conviction

In March, 1968 Sostre was convicted for possession and sale of heroin after arguing his own case in court. He is now serving 31 to 41 years in Green Haven Prison in Poughkeepsie, New York.

For her small part in the drama at the Afro-Asian Bookstore, Mrs. Geraldine Robinson, 25, and the mother of five children, was named co-defendant.

On the eve of Memorial Day, May 29, she was convicted by an all-white jury after a six-hour deliberation. Charged with aiding in the sale of narcotics and interfering with an arrest (Sostre's), Mrs. Robinson now awaits sentencing in the court of County

Judge Ernest L. Colucci, which reconvenes on September 4.

Judge Colucci advanced the date for sentencing three times until the September date was agreed on. Each stay was granted at the intercession of Mrs. Robinson's New York City attorney, Charles T. McKinney. The date was postponed a third and final time because court documents vital to Mr. McKinney's case had reportedly been stolen from his home. He was unable to appear in court.

### Faces 5-15 years

After her conviction, Mrs. Robinson's bail was raised to \$10,000 from the original \$5,000 figure. She resides with her children at 15 Storz Avenue in Buffalo.

According to law, Mrs. Robinson's conviction could result in imprisonment for 5-15 years. A maximum sentence is highly unlikely, however, since Mrs. Robinson has no previous record.

"The best thing the court can do, in good faith, is to give Geraldine a suspended sentence," according to a spokesman for the Martin Sostre Defense Committee. This group has remained under the same name since the incident in July, 1967, when Sostre and Mrs. Robinson were arrested. The Defense Committee has publicized the Sostre-Robinson case, as well as raised bail money and court fees from those sympathetic with the issues involved.

### Mother of five

Mrs. Robinson's conviction will definitely be appealed after the September 4 session.

As soon as sentence is passed, the bond which is being held on her becomes invalid. Her attorney must then apply for a "certificate of reasonable doubt" from

the Erie County Supreme Court, as well as give notice of the appeal.

If the certificate is granted, she will be granted another bail figure, which will be the same or more than the \$10,000 already bonded. Before she can stay out of jail the, Mrs. Robinson must meet the costs of the new bond.

Mrs. Robinson is on welfare and it will be obviously difficult to raise a new sum of money.

In 1967, Mrs. Robinson ran a dingy, hole-in-the-wall shopfront bookstore on Orange and High Streets on Buffalo's East Side, which supplemented the activities of Sostre's Jefferson branch.

According to her court testimony, she made enough money to pay a babysitter to watch her children.

### Not political

"Geraldine," the Committee source continued, "is not 'political' like Mr. Sostre. . . She is just a woman who is proud of being black."

"She was tied to her home and was leading a very unproductive life before she began helping with the bookstore. She just tried to get out and help her own people."

Buffalo, like many major cities across the nation, experienced a wildfire ghetto riot in 1967. The fire seldom grew hot enough to encompass political issues directly, but some advocates of the Sostre-Robinson case claim the City of Good Neighbors was an exception. From the beginning the political overtones of the arrest and subsequent conviction of the two has been emphasized by sympathetic parties.

But in the case of Geraldine Robinson, a mother of five children, political issues seem small indeed.



## Amherst meetings continue, but BUILD does not attend

The only apparent result of a meeting Monday between Dr. Anthony G. Adinolfi, general manager of the State University Construction Fund, and representatives of various campus and community groups was to call another meeting.

Monday morning's session in the office of University President Martin Meyerson was called by Dr. Adinolfi in order for the various minority groups to attempt to settle their differences and form a united front in negotiations with contractors and building trades unions.

Present at the meeting were representatives of the Minority Coalition, the Urban League, Opportunity Development Corporation, Work for All, the Black Students Union, and the Worker's Defense League.

BUILD, a prominent community organization, was invited to the meeting but did not attend. They issued the following statement Monday afternoon:

"Today the BUILD organization, a federation of 154 block clubs, churches, social and fraternal groups in Buffalo's East Side responded to Dr. Anthony G. Adinolfi's invitation to a meeting to be held at the University of Buffalo Monday morning.

"The telegram contained only two words: Drop dead.

"BUILD would not attend the meeting because:

"1. BUILD said that the State Construction Fund has shown no real commitment to creating anything but confusion in the black community. The efforts of the fund to create a political power base and plantation politics engaged in to accomplish this has created a serious credibility gap between Dr. Adinolfi and the black community. His politicking has destroyed the fund's ability to bring a meaningful program to the Buffalo area.

"2. The responsibility of opening the doors of the lily-white unions is the state's responsibility and getting this done does not depend on all organizations joining a few individuals hand-picked by the state.

"If the state is serious about real affirmative

action . . . prove it by:

"2a. Establishing hiring halls independent of the unions. (Only four are being legally operated).

"2b. Demand of the unions, before any contracts are let, that half the new jobs go to the minority groups.

"2c. In addition to training programs, demand that unions use the young men coming through the vocational schools and their apprenticeship programs."

The Rev. James T. Hemphill, president of the Minority Coalition issued a statement after Monday's three-hour meeting calling for BUILD and the Minority Coalition to meet Thursday, July 17, at the Michigan Avenue YMCA to work on a training program.

Representatives of Work For All and the BSU were invited to participate on planning. It was agreed that DC and WDL would only be utilized to provide technical assistance to the program.

Mr. William Gaiter, president of BUILD, said Tuesday that a BUILD delegation would attend the meeting. When asked why BUILD had decided to attend the second meeting and not the one Monday, he replied: "One reason was that Mr. Adinolfi personally called Monday's meeting. We don't know him; he has never been in contact with us.

"Whether we agree or disagree with the Minority Coalition, they are people in the community and we should give them our respect, one more time at least," Mr. Gaiter said.

Dr. Adinolfi called the result of the meeting a "reasonable product." He expressed the hope that BUILD would be convinced to join with a united front in negotiations that must follow.

"BUILD is a bona fide, community-based organization and I will do everything I can to see they have an active part in negotiations." Dr. Adinolfi said.

Dr. Adinolfi said that negotiations must begin soon. He once again reaffirmed that the university will be built on its planned site in Amherst.

To be  
sentenced

Mrs. Geraldine Robinson, shown here with her five children, awaits sentencing September 4. She is the co-defendant of imprisoned Martin Sostre, owner of the Afro-Asian Bookstore.