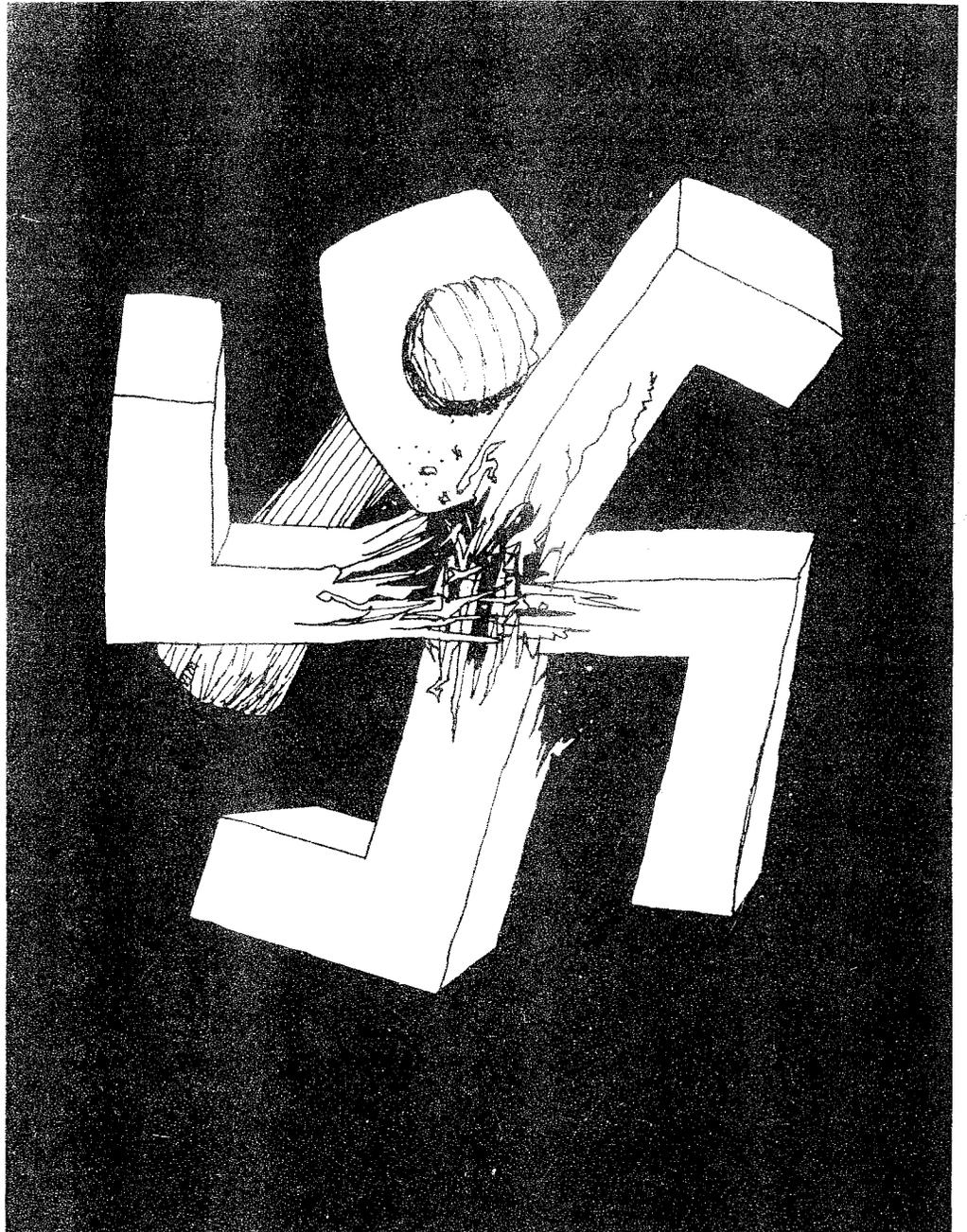


THE FIGHT TO
IMPLEMENT BUSING
FOR
LABOR/BLACK DEFENSE
TO STOP RACIST ATTACKS
AND TO
SMASH FASCIST THREATS





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Anti-Busing Forces Must Be Defeated!

On April 3 this year [1974] a crowd of 20,000, exclusively white, demonstrated in Boston for repeal of the 1965 Massachusetts Racial Imbalance Act. After an eight-day delay the law was finally slated for implementation through large-scale busing of public school children, both in Boston proper and nearby suburbs. In late July the Supreme Court, in a stunning reversal of previous decisions, overturned by a 5-4 vote a lower court ruling that children from the overwhelmingly black Detroit inner city be bussed to the largely white suburbs. Not satisfied with the Supreme Court's ban on cross-district busing, the following week Congress passed the education budget bill with an amendment barring the busing of a child beyond the next-closest school.

The Supreme Court and Congressional actions effectively cripple the racial integration of urban schools and go a long way toward undoing the famous 1954 decision. The anti-busing actions at the highest levels of government are major blows against the democratic rights of black people.

White Backlash Whips Busing

The "white backlash," most dramatically evident in the electoral successes of Alabama's populist/racist former governor George Wallace, has long threatened to reverse even the formal legal gains of the civil rights movement. Opposition to school busing is the cutting edge of the white backlash. The emotion-ridden issue played a central role in

both Wallace's and Nixon's 1972 presidential campaigns. And at the lower political levels a new generation of racist demagogues, typified by Boston's Louise Day Hicks, has risen to prominence on the anti-busing campaign.

The first major attempt to legally reverse court-ordered busing was Nixon's 1972 education bill. Passed by the House, it was killed by a filibuster of Senate liberals. This election year, however, poll-conscious liberals have unceremoniously decamped from their earlier half-hearted support for busing. Already smelling a Republican rout in November in the wake of Watergate, the Democrats will do just about anything to prevent school integration from again becoming an embarrassing campaign issue. Senate Democratic leader Mike Mansfield arranged the "compromise" to eliminate the expansion of busing, while letting past court orders stand.

In the face of the racist reaction to integration, the black political establishment in the main has surrendered, reverting to the politics of Booker T. Washington. At least on the critical school question, prominent black politicians are prepared to support *de facto* segregation in return for more patronage. On hearing the Supreme Court ruling, Detroit mayor Coleman Young stated, "I shed no great tears for cross-district busing," and then demanded more educational money for his administration (*New York Times*, 26 July). The Black Caucus of the Massachusetts State Legislature indicated its willingness to support repeal of the Racial Imbalance Act in return for some kind of "community control" patronage deal.

Although totally inadequate even as a solution to school segregation, busing is at least a minimal attempt to allow the black poor a share in the benefits of white American society. Moreover, busing has become a symbol in the struggle against black oppression in general. If the anti-busing campaign is successful, if the Hicks, Wallaces and Fords win on this question, it will greatly encourage the forces of racist reaction to turn the calendar back before 1954 at every level. The successful drive in state legislatures to restore the death penalty and the Supreme Court's recent reactionary rulings on prisoner rights are part of the same rightward political motion reflected in the Congressional anti-busing stand and Supreme Court ruling.

Apart from its importance as a democratic issue and its limited but tangible contribution to the quality of education available to the black poor, there is a further reason that proletarian revolutionaries must support busing. It is desperately necessary to use all means possible to break the black masses out of the social isolation of the ghetto. The hard race line in this country, stronger on the personal level

even than in the old rural South, is poison to socialist consciousness.

Most whites today view blacks as a hostile social group, with whom they can have no friends, no ties and no basis for identification. The prevailing social climate in this country contains the potential for race war, in which (given their relative social power) the blacks would be the principal victims. It is only at the point of production that black/white relations are not generally hostile and where common proletarian interests occasionally overcome the rigid racial division of American society.

"Separate But Equal" Socialists

The racial integration of public schools—and that is what the busing conflict is all about—is such an elementary democratic right, and the opponents of busing are so shamelessly racist, that it is difficult to believe that any left-wing organization would not support court-ordered busing. Nonetheless, two self-proclaimed socialist groups, the ostensibly Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and the social-democratic International Socialists (IS), actually *oppose* legally enforced school desegregation, though their reasons differ: the former advocates black nationalism while the latter capitulates to white racist backwardness.

The SWP is opposed to busing because it believes that racially separate schools ("black control of the black community") are progressive. As SWP candidates Linda Jenness and Andrew Pulley stated in their 1972 presidential/vice-presidential campaign:

"But money alone won't solve the problem of Black education. Black control of Black education must also be established. Black control means Black people electing community councils through which the masses can administer and supervise these funds as well as all aspects of school functioning. . . . It includes being able to decide whether Black students will or will not be bussed."

—*Militant*, 10 March 1972

But the SWP's opportunist appetites seem to be counterposed to taking a hard position on any subject. Thus Jenness/Pulley state in the same article that while the SWP "does not see busing as *the* solution," if the "Black community" supports busing then so will they!

The difference between Wallace/Hicks and Jenness/Pulley turns out to be only that the former want to prohibit blacks from attending white schools, while the SWP wants to convince blacks not to. (Both agree on preventing whites from attending black schools.) In practice, even this difference evaporates. Wallace and Hicks would happily agree to the SWP policy, since they believe they can discourage blacks from wanting to attend white neighborhood schools. Voluntary busing is an open invitation for organized harassment and racial violence against the volunteers. The history of school desegregation since 1954 is full of examples of such harassment, from demonstrations by white parents in Little Rock against integration in 1956 to burning of school buses by the Ku Klux Klan in Michigan in the 1970's.

The SWP has embraced the Uncle Tom tradition of black acceptance of "separate but equal" facilities. If the SWP took historical traditions seriously, next to their posters of Che Guevara and Malcolm X they should also display the ideological inspirer of their position on black education—Booker T. Washington.

The International Socialists have the dishonor of capitulating directly to the white racist backlash on the busing question:

"'Two-way' busing involves more than simply the right of black people to attend any school they want, a right which socialists unconditionally defend. It also involves sending white students (mostly working class) to worse schools, an issue made to order for racists.

"Even whites who are not racist find it impossible to defend. . . . For these reasons, socialists oppose both the 'pro'-busing and 'anti'-busing forces, both of whom use racism to further their own ends."

—*Workers Power*, 10 November 1972

For blacks the IS position amounts to essentially the same thing as the SWP's. Blacks have the right to volunteer to attend white neighborhood schools in the face of organized racist violence. But—horror of horrors—whites must not be assigned to ghetto schools! The ghetto schools are hell holes not because of their geographical location, but because they serve as prison camps for restless black lumpen youth. Under the present conditions of rampant white racism, the presence of significant numbers of white students could be an at least minimally effective way of introducing an element of change into the nature of ghetto schools. If an all-black school becomes 20 percent white, the administration, teachers and the cops will behave rather differently.

On the other hand all the talk about quality education—

on both sides of the busing conflict—is bourgeois idealist hogwash. Ghetto schools do not teach because there are no jobs, no careers for the products of those schools. Black lumpen youth cannot use the knowledge normally transmitted through the public school system to get ahead in American society. Doubling the budget for ghetto schools would have little effect on the cultural level of the black masses and even less effect on their economic situation. As long as blacks remain a race-color caste, concentrated at the bottom of American society and imprisoned in ghettos, changes in formal education will have only a marginal impact on black people.

For Free Universal Higher Education

While the Spartacist League supports busing regardless of popular opposition to it, it would be moralistic idealism, not scientific socialism, to believe whites can be won over simply by appeals to democratic principles. White workers and petty bourgeois will accept busing only when they believe it does not attack their material interests.

White parental opposition to busing reflects both racist attitudes as such and a belief that an influx of blacks will lower educational quality, thereby making it more difficult for their children to get into and do well in college. In reality, the available studies show that integrated schools have little effect on the academic performance of either white or black children. However, whites do view busing as a serious threat to the future educational/career prospects for their children.

U.S. whites will accept integrated public schools only if the intensely competitive screening/tracking purpose of the educational system is eliminated. Socialists must demand free higher education for all with an adequate stipend to cover living expenses for every student. Free universal higher education will not eliminate those anti-busing forces that reflect pure and simple racist bigotry, but it would fundamentally undercut the anti-busing sentiment arising out of the struggle over limited educational resources.

For Low-Rent Racially Integrated Housing

Some opposition to busing, particularly from the school children themselves, is due to the time-consuming inconvenience involved. While recognizing the resistance to extensive busing caused by practical considerations, the convenience issue is totally dwarfed by the central question of the democratic rights of blacks.

Busing is a somewhat artificial attempt to overcome ghetto-

ization. Given the geographical concentrations of blacks and whites, busing, even under the best of circumstances, could not produce racially balanced schools. For example, only 30 percent of New York City school children are classified as non-Puerto Rican whites. The rigid and many-sided separation of blacks and whites in American society must be attacked at its most blatant level—ghettoization.

The existence of and commitment to exclusively white neighborhoods reflect racist attitudes, personal economic advantage and fear of racial violence. For white homeowners, there is an obvious economic advantage in keeping neighborhood property values up by keeping blacks out. More importantly, when blacks move into a white neighborhood, this is seen by everyone as the expansion of the ghetto: any whites who do not move out will soon find themselves in the unenviable and dangerous situation of being isolated in a black neighborhood.

Only a powerful material incentive can break down the rigid racially divided neighborhood pattern. Socialists must demand the construction of low-rent, racially integrated quality public housing. Many white families would show a very different attitude toward having black neighbors if it meant they could pay a third of their present rent for a comparable or even better dwelling. On the other hand, hardened bigots who insist on living in their exclusive neighborhoods would then be paying dearly for that privilege.

It is unlikely that free universal higher education or low-rent, racially integrated housing will ever be achieved under conditions of bourgeois class rule. However, such demands are essential to turn the black and white working masses' present clawing at each other over a larger share of the pie into a united struggle against the common enemy—the capitalist class. ■

—reprinted from Young Spartacus, September 1974

Young Spartacus

Number 26

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November 1974

Stop Racist Terror in Boston!

Implement and Extend the Busing Plan! Not Federal Troops, But Labor/Black Defense!

*RU Calls for
Smashing Busing
CP, SWP Demand
Federal Troops*

In the two weeks since Boston public schools opened on September 12, the court-ordered busing of students to achieve racial balance has provoked a vicious racist backlash. The anti-busing school boycott, centering on predominantly working-class South Boston, has escalated into city-wide, organized racist mass demonstrations and lynch-mob terror. Racial epithets and rocks are being hurled at buses carrying defenseless Black schoolchildren by gangs of white parents and especially youth, roving frenzied mobs are intimidating and assaulting Blacks on the streets, rioting and bomb scares are disrupting more and more schools, night-riding vigilantes are shooting into the air (whiteliming) black Columbia Point housing projects, and blood-thirsty Ku Klux Klan provocateurs are being pulled from large anti-busing rallies. Boston leaders on the brink of race war.

As the racist attacks mount, both the Boston school committee and the City Council have been actively aiding the anti-busing forces. The Great Healer, President Ford, has conspicuously fanned the racist flames by declaring at his October 9 news conference, "I have consistently opposed forced busing to achieve racial balance." The Boston anti-busing efforts are becoming a rallying point for a renewed offensive for racist politicians like George Wallace and the organizations leading anti-desegregation campaigns in Baltimore and Denver.



While liberal politicians, community "leaders" and their crown "left" chorus beg for federal troops, the SL/SYL boldly pointed way for a real defense.

The racist terror in Boston must be stopped! The anti-busing forces must be defeated!

The Spartacus Youth League supports busing as a minimal application of the elementary principle of Black people to equality in education. We are as principled in favor of breaking down all barriers of racial

segregation in all areas of society. Racism is rooted in the real material oppression of black people under capitalism, and education and integration are very much a part of that oppression. We are in favor of the all-sided integration of blacks into society, for then the basis for united class struggle is strengthened. While certainly a bourgeois measure, busing does strike a blow, albeit contradictory and partial, at segregated education and must be supported. "Anti-Busing Forces Must Be Defeated" (Lombard News, September 1974).

The present busing plan is totally inadequate, and we demand that busing be extended to include the same urban schools. Boston's anti-busing whites are inflexible that they have never desegregated, and we demand that in integrating suburban, its race, whose schools remain essentially white.

The relatively better suburban schools should be opened up to black, Puerto Rican, and working-class white students from the inner city. Busing suburban students into the inner-city schools would itself result in increasing the considerable middle-class suburban vote to bear on city politicians to upgrade these schools.

However, desegregating capitalism's arrangement of housing schools is clearly not the solution. We demand quality public education with an end to tracking and two universal higher education with a state stipend for all who wish to learn. Furthermore, we call for the construction through the city of low-rent, high-quality, multi-unit public housing to replace the ghettos and slums. We demand that the "target population" of the ghetto, the Black, Puerto Rican, and other oppressed peoples of the

SL/SYL, PL/SDS SCAB ON CHICAGO STRIKE!
...page 6

SL/SYL intervened, in demonstrations, through leaflets and in its press, against racist anti-busing forces in Boston.

Letter to Boston Trade Unions,
Black and Socialist
Organizations

Act Now!
Defend
Black Children!

Boston
22 September 1974

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

Boston's trade unions, black and socialist organizations must defend the democratic rights of black people, which are currently under attack in a vicious reactionary and racist mobilization against busing. Our organizations have the urgent responsibility to act *now* to put a halt to the campaign of physical and psychological terror that is being inflicted on black school children in this city. The unions and black organizations such as the NAACP, because of their influence and resources, must take the lead in immediately calling and mobilizing for a massive public rally of all those who oppose this campaign of racist violence and harassment.

The leaders of the pro-busing forces have relied solely on the courts, the legislature and the police. Failing to mobilize massive, visible public support for busing as a minimal but democratic measure has allowed anti-busing forces to pose as the popular mass movement of the "little people" against the government.

The busing issue, inflamed by the demagoguery of the Hicks and Kerrigans, has brought to the surface the deep-seated racist fears of large sections of Boston's white ethnic communities. The polarization in Boston could reach ex-

plosive levels; harassment of black children has escalated and spread in the last week. Despicable racist trash like the Nazi Party and the Ku Klux Klan are gathering in Boston hoping to add organization and muscle to the anti-busing movement. These vicious hooligans would like to find in tension-ridden Boston the conditions for launching the sort of terror they have previously unleashed against blacks, Catholics and Jews elsewhere in this country.

The Boston Police Patrolmen's Association (BPPA) has made clear through editorials and articles in its paper, the *Pax Centurion*, that the police stand not with the defenseless black children whom they are supposed to be protecting but with the anti-busing forces. The insistence of a BPPA attorney that policeman could not be prosecuted for refusing "in good conscience" to arrest these rock-throwing racists is evidence of their position and can only encourage the white vigilantes. Numerous children have already been injured; we can not wait for a tragic death to galvanize the forces of defense.

It is already late. The reactionaries are organizing to trample on the democratic rights and legality which they falsely claim to uphold. For example, the attempt by several hundred demonstrators to suppress distribution of the *Boston Globe* for its pro-busing policies is a particularly alarming indication of the character of the anti-busing movement. *It is, however, not too late!* The leaderships of the unions and black organizations are the only ones at this time with sufficient influence and resources to successfully organize a mass popular demonstration protesting the racist violence against Boston's black school children. Such a mobilization would crystallize public outrage against the vigilantes and begin to isolate them, laying the basis for putting an end to their activities.

The safety and well-being of hundreds of black children are clearly in danger. Further, anti-busing forces around the country are keeping a close watch on the situation in Boston (the *Globe* of 22 September reports that the Denver Citizen's Association for Neighborhood Schools has been in daily contact with Boston anti-busing forces).

As leaders of the organizations which represent large numbers of working and poor people, black and white, you must take action! To settle now for a boycott of the schools by black children, without having first attempted to mobilize all available forces in their defense, is to hand a victory to the Klan, the Nazis, the Hicks and the Kerrigans and to accept a momentous setback in the struggle for democratic

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rights for racial minorities in the U.S.

Our organizations may disagree on many social, economic and political issues, but we can all agree with the need for immediate united action in defense of the black school children under attack by anti-busing forces. In the framework of joint actions against these racist attacks, all participating groups would, of course, be free to raise their own particular points of view.

We repeat our urgent proposal for a broad mobilization, initiated by the unions, black and socialist organizations, to build a mass popular demonstration around the common slogan, "Stop the Racist Attacks Against Black School Children." The Spartacist League, a labor-socialist organization, pledges to devote all available resources and energy to aid in the building of such a demonstration. However, at this time, no single organization can mobilize sufficient forces for a successful defense. Therefore, we urgently request your response within 48 hours so that a first planning meeting can be held soon, hopefully by mid-week. *To fail to act now is to accept responsibility for the escalating attack on defenseless children, and for the potentially tragic outcome.*

Bob Simons,
for the Spartacist League

—reprinted from Workers Vanguard, 27 September 1974

SWP/YSA Defends Liberals' Call for Troops Into Boston

Not Federal Troops, But Labor/Black Defense!

The sewer-socialists of the Socialist Workers Party/Young Socialist Alliance (SWP/YSA) have felt compelled to sacrifice two pages of customary hack journalism in the *Militant* (November 1) in order to defend their slogan calling for federal troops to "protect" blacks from racist terror in the Boston busing crisis. One article is a bland, pedagogic reply to a critical letter from a reader; the second comprises edited excerpts of SWP/YSA-honcho Peter Camejo's demagogic response to the "sectarians" of the Spartacist League, and less significantly the Workers League, at an October 11 Militant Labor Forum in Boston [see "From the Augean Stables: Workers League 'Answers' SWP On Troops," *Young Spartacus* No. 27, December 1974]. These articles upholding the liberal pro-troop policy reveal once again, yet with forced clarity, the SWP/YSA's revisionism on the most central conception of Marxism: the nature of the capitalist state.

The essential assumption underlying all the derivative and superfluous arguments regurgitated in these articles is that *it is possible to control the armed forces of the capitalist state through mass pressure*. This is nothing new for the SWP/YSA. For years these petty-bourgeois reformists have been tailing black nationalists and pushing the demand for "community control of the police." But in Boston today, the SWP/YSA is fawning before the more popular misleaders of the NAACP and the Black Caucus of the Massachusetts State

Legislature, to whom the *Militant* so respectfully refers to as "the leaders of the Black community," who are demanding federal troops.

But reformist theory serves diverse appetites. If militant mass pressure can effectively "control" the racist, murderous cops, then certainly b-r-o-a-d popular pressure can force the more "professional" federal troops to act in the interests of the oppressed. Hoping that the sought-for liberals are listening, the *Militant* thus declares:

"In Boston today the demand that the government send in its troops to desegregate the schools can be used as the rallying point for the involvement of the broadest possible layers of the Black community and its allies in struggle.... In fact, the civil rights movement of the 1950's and early 1960's was built around mass actions demanding that the government enforce its laws. *When the mass pressure became great enough, as at Little Rock and later at Selma, Ala., the federal government was forced to intervene. In these cases the government did not attack the black community; it was trying to placate the mass sentiment mobilized on behalf of that community.... A mass movement demanding that troops be called up to enforce desegregation of the Boston schools would put the government on the defensive. It would make it more difficult for the government to use these troops against Blacks instead of the white racists.... whether or not any law will be used against the oppressed is determined by the relation of forces in the actual struggle.*"[emphasis ours]

Offering themselves to the NAACP and Black Caucus liberals as respectable "Marxist" spokesmen and "movement"-builders who venerate the liberal-pacifist "civil rights movement of the 1950's and early 1960's" and who recognize "the leaders of the Black community," the SWP/YSA does not limit its prostitution of Marxism to supporting uncritically the liberal policy of reliance on the government. No, indeed. Brother Camejo has taken the task of denouncing the slogan of labor/black defense, which has always been anathema to the liberals:

"Instead of federal troops, the sectarians propose that there be trade-union defense guards.... The call for trade-union defense guards isn't realistic right now. There are no trade unions that even have defense guards, much less any that have offered them to defend the Black students.... But you pull this slogan of trade-union defense guards totally out of the blue. It's not a serious proposal. It has nothing to do with meeting the needs of the Black community today.... The Black community lives in the real world, and it demands real, meaningful solutions, not unrealistic slogans."

And to dispel any possible lingering wariness the liberals might have about its sincerity in formerly enthusing over

NATIONAL STUDENT CONFERENCE AGAINST RACISM 5. 14-15-16 • BOSTON UNIVERSITY



YOUNG SPARTACUS



SWP-backed National Student Conference Against Racism is based on program of liberal reformists like NAACP leader "Uncle Tom" Atkins (above). SWP/YSA calls for federal troops to Boston (below).

"armed black self-defense," the *Militant* bluntly proclaims: "The demand to bring in federal troops puts the responsibility right where it lies: in Washington."

What Are the Federal Troops?

For Marxists the state is "an organization of the exploiting class at each period for the maintenance of its external conditions of production," that is, of exploitation; it is, again in the words of Marx and Engels, "a public force organized for social enslavement," "a machine for the oppression of one class by another," and "an engine of class despotism." This "public force," in the final analysis, reduces itself to special bodies of armed men—the police, special security forces and the military—which are backed up by the bureaucracy, judicature and prisons.

Capitalism organically requires this "special repressive force"—the cops and army—separate from and standing above the broad masses in order to perform the repressive functions necessary for the continuation of capitalist society, to enforce bourgeois "law and order" through force or under the threat of force. When the workers and oppressed revolt or otherwise challenge the rule of the capitalist class, the fundamental nature of the police and army is revealed with brutal, swift and deadly force. Thus, those duties of public service which the police and federal troops may perform—directing traffic, assisting invalids, intervening in natural disasters and the like—are clearly auxiliary functions which, unlike the repressive functions, could even be executed by revocable agents of the people.

From the time of the Paris Commune on, Marx and Engels waged a continual struggle to instill in the workers movement the crucial understanding that the police, army and state bureaucracy could not be controlled or taken over and made to work in the interests of the exploited, but had to be smashed. Marx and Engels thus declared that the "working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery, and wield it for its own purposes" but must "set aside all the old repressive machinery previously used against itself." This is the fundamental thesis in the Marxist theory of the state and the historic dividing line between revolutionary socialism and reformism of all varieties.

If the proletariat in power cannot "control" capitalism's police and army, then even more utopian is the illusion that it can do so when it is not in power. Deceived by Allende's assurances that the military was under its control, the Chilean workers and peasants paid with their blood for the

reformism of their misleaders. The little Kautskys of the SWP/YSA have already declared their revisionism on the question of the state and merely await their moment in history.

Communists have never turned to the bourgeoisie demanding that it use its repressive forces to protect the struggles of those whom it oppresses. Unlike reformists and the "labor lieutenants of capital," revolutionists have never demanded that the cops or federal troops intervene to "protect" the strikes of workers, even when the strikes concern the enforcement of some bourgeois legislation beneficial to the working class. The role of the federal troops, not to mention the cops, in labor struggles is too well known. It was the Stalinists who demanded troops in the Little Steel struggle of 1937. The Steel Workers Organizing Committee told the workers that they should "welcome" the troops, whom they said would "protect" the strikers and "keep the mills closed." The troops instead slaughtered 18 and wounded scores more, and the Little Steel strike was defeated.

Lenin never would have considered calling upon the troops of the Czar to protect the Jews, Armenians and other oppressed nationalities from the vicious pogroms of the Black Hundred gangs. Referring to "the lynching of Negroes" in the U.S., Lenin denounced as "belly-crawling and boot-licking before the capitalists" Kautsky's prattle about the capitalist state "protecting the minority":

"...the ruling party in a bourgeois democracy extends the protection of the minority only to another *bourgeois* party, while on all *serious, profound and fundamental* issues the proletariat gets martial law or pogroms, instead of the 'protection of the minority.' *The more highly developed a democracy is, the more imminent are pogroms or civil war in connection with any profound political divergence which is dangerous to the bourgeoisie.*" [original emphasis]

—Collected Works, Vol. 28, p. 245

Contrary to the treacherous illusions spewed by the SWP/YSA, a mass mobilization of blacks in struggle, which constitutes a "*profound political divergence which is dangerous to the bourgeoisie,*" will bring the bosses' troops not into the control of the masses, but down on their heads! When Camejo and his ilk conspicuously and repeatedly point to instances where the cops or troops (always in the interests of bourgeois "law and order") *occasionally* save individual lives, it is precisely to divert attention from the role of the bourgeois armed forces in those "serious, profound and fundamental" struggles against the racist capitalist order.

Trotsky likewise denounced contemptuously those reform-

ist misleaders who called upon the capitalist state to use its troops to protect workers and Jews from the terror of the fascist gangs:

"To turn to the state, that is, to capital, with the demand to disarm the fascists means to sow the worst democratic illusions, to lull the vigilance of the proletariat, to demoralize its will....The Social Democrats, even the most left ones, that is, those who are ready to repeat general phrases of revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat, carefully avoid the question of arming the workers, or openly declare this task 'chimerical,' adventurous, 'romantic,' etc."

—*Writings of Leon Trotsky, 1933-34*, p. 321-322

In the *Transitional Program*, Trotsky emphasized the extreme importance of propagandizing and whenever possible organizing workers defense guards—the embryo of a future workers militia—so that the workers would learn in the course of the class struggle the power and methods of working-class defense:

"In connection with every strike and street demonstration, it is imperative to propagate the necessity of creating *workers groups for self-defense*....It is necessary to advance the slogan of a *workers militia* as the one serious guarantee for the inviolability of workers' organizations, meetings and press." [emphasis in original]

The slogan of workers defense guards, as the "one serious guarantee" for the protection of the struggles of the oppressed, comes not "totally out of the blue," Brother Camejo, but straight out of the Trotskyist *Transitional Program*. Neither this demand, nor any demand of the *Transitional Program*, is for the SWP/YSA "realistic," "serious" or "meaningful" simply because its program is reformism, not Trotskyism. For the "unbounded opportunism" of the reformists, Lenin noted, "that struggle is desirable which is possible, and the struggle which is possible is that which is going on at the given moment."

Principle and Tactics

Revolutionary Marxists regard the capitalist army and workers defense guards/workers militia as counterposed class formations. When it is a question of defending the struggles of the oppressed, the call for federal troops and the call for a workers defense force are counterposed slogans which are separated by a principled position on the nature of the capitalist state. The call for a labor/black defense in Boston today is a statement of no confidence in the bosses' army. "To turn to the state, that is, to capital," and demand that federal troops

protect black people against the racists who are being openly encouraged by the government "means to sow the worst democratic illusions, to lull the vigilance of the proletariat, to demoralize its will."

While communists are opposed in principle to a policy of reliance upon the "special repressive force" of capitalism, our attitude toward an entire range of specific actions or situations involving the cops or troops often has a tactical dimension. Thus, Trotsky, who so vehemently denounced turning to the state for protection from the fascists, pointed out that in certain instances the workers, independently organized and mobilized, could and should engage, for example, in episodic military blocs with government troops against the fascists:

"An irreconcilable attitude against bourgeois militarism does not signify at all that the proletariat *in all cases* enters into a struggle against its own 'national' army. At least the workers would not interfere with soldiers who are extinguishing a fire or rescuing drowning people during a flood; on the contrary, they would help side by side with the soldiers and fraternize with them. And the question is not exhausted merely by cases of elemental calamities. If the French fascists should make an attempt today at a *coup d'état* and the Daladier government found itself forced to move troops against the fascists, the revolutionary workers, while maintaining their complete political independence, would fight against the fascists alongside of these troops." [original emphasis]

—*Writings of Leon Trotsky, 1938-39, p.5*

But, to dissolve principles into tactics is one of the hoary methods of revisionists to cover a reformist policy. Thus, Camejo cites incidents in which a Boston cop saved a black man from a racist mob and federal troops "protected" civil rights activists in the South in order to disprove the "sectarian" and "schematic formulas" that "everything they ever do is against the interests of the workers." Revolutionists obviously do not intervene against police or troops when they are in fact saving someone from assault or murder and when the balance of forces is overwhelmingly against us. This is clearly a matter of tactics. Camejo cites such instances to demonstrate that if the cops or troops without mass pressure can protect the oppressed, then they can certainly do so reliably under "terrific pressure." What for communists are the exigencies and prerogatives of bourgeois "law and order" are for the SWP/YSA traitors the justification for preaching reliance on the armed fist of capital and for opposing labor/black defense.

Troops and Blacks: The Record

In order to front for the liberals and defend their treacherous pro-troop policy, Messrs. Camejo and Co. repeatedly recall the intervention of troops in the civil rights movement as a great "victory." The use of troops in race riots and civil rights actions can be seen as a "victory" only for those whose fundamental perspective is liberal reformism. Troops have always been used to contain or snuff out militant action or revolt by the oppressed black masses. The capitalists deploy their troops precisely at those times when the insurgent black masses threaten to, or actually do, break out of the passive, impotent protests imposed by their petty-bourgeois misleaders. The liberals' demand for troops and the government's decision to send them in fact spring from basically similar motivations: the desire to curb independent mobilization by blacks and to reimpose "nonviolence" (which means no change). For communists, federal troops can only be seen as a massive obstacle in the class-struggle road to black liberation. What does the history of federal intervention with troops into race riots and the Southern civil rights movement reveal?

DETROIT, 1943: During the infamous Detroit race riot, the Roosevelt government stood by and did absolutely nothing when day after day blacks were being beaten and butchered in the streets by crazed mobs of racists. It was only when blacks began to retaliate by stoning white cars and destroying white property in Paradise Valley, and when black soldiers stationed 140 miles away at Fort Custer attempted to seize arms and march to Detroit to protect their families, that Roosevelt ordered federal troops into Detroit. The federal troops arrested the black soldiers and clamped martial law upon Detroit. This is how federal troops "protected" Detroit's blacks!

But the policy of the then-Trotskyist SWP was a far cry from what fills the pages of the *Militant* today. Under the headline, "Labor Must Crush the Anti-Negro Terror," the Statement of the National Committee of the SWP courageously declared:

"What must be done to stop this lynch violence? Certainly no trust or reliance can be placed in the federal authorities, the army, state or municipal police, the good-will of the capitalist rulers, the action of Congress or the President. They have shown that they will not take the steps needed to protect Negro lives and rights.

"The chief responsibility for defending the Negro people rests today upon the trade unions.... The labor leaders must do more than deplore these attacks upon the Negro people. They must do more than order their members to stay off the streets and appeal for grand-jury investigations. They must

summon their membership to take determined and organized action against the instigators and organizers of these lynch mobs.

"The members of each local should be mobilized for action. Flying squadrons of union militants should stand ready to protect the rights of their Negro fellow-workers menaced by the mobs."

—*Militant*, 3 July 1943

These words ring out from the SWP's revolutionary past as a mighty denunciation of the sniveling social democrats who lead this party today. A Trotskyist policy places "no trust or reliance" in "the federal authorities, the army," but rather declares that "the chief responsibility for defending the Negro people rests today upon the trade unions." None of this "ultra-left sectarianism" for Camejo and Co.! No, "The demand to bring in federal troops puts the responsibility right where it lies: in Washington." A Trotskyist policy challenges the cowardly inaction of the labor skates and calls for "squadrons of union militants." None of these wild "unrealistic slogans" that have "nothing to do with meeting the needs of the Black community today" for Camejo's SWP/YSA.

The policy of the SWP toward the Detroit riot was nonetheless flawed, not on the principled question of no confidence in the federal troops, but on a tactical orientation to the black soldiers. The same Statement of the National Committee asserted:

"The Negro people have both the right and the duty to protect themselves against lawless attacks of the lynch mobs. They have the right to demand that, in the event of any future attacks, Negro troops alone be used and Negroes be deputized to defend them."

The SWP here was seeking to intersect the outrage of the black soldiers toward the racist terror and the deep solidarity of Detroit's embattled blacks with the heroic uprising at Fort Custer. The SWP in effect was saying: we have no confidence in and do not call for federal troops; but, should the government send them, then let it be *these* troops. While having absolutely nothing in common with Camejo and Co.'s call for federal troops and denunciation of labor/black defense, this formulation definitely weakened the SWP's otherwise clarion call for workers defense.

LITTLE ROCK, 1957: When following a desegregation order the black students attempting to attend Little Rock High School were daily subjected to racist harassment, President Eisenhower simply ignored all calls for federal intervention. But when a race riot in the High School sparked a massive black upheaval, in which blacks poured out of their homes with arms

longer to cower "nonviolently" and began to establish armed street patrols and observation posts in the ghetto for self-defense. Roy Wilkins of the NAACP caught the situation when he declared: "If there is an incident there, I shudder to think what will happen because they will not—the great rank and file will not—accede to the fine discipline of King" (quoted in *New York Times*, 19 May 1963). It was the sight of enraged blacks in armed patrols and apprehension over the prospects of a failure of the nonviolent movement that provoked Kennedy to deploy troops to Alabama (reported in *New York Times*, 14 May 1963). The good Rev. M.L. King, who had promised the city's white businessmen that the blacks would refrain from mass demonstrations, welcomed Kennedy's intervention.

The SWP, now in full flight from revolutionary Marxism, adopted a centrist position of calling upon Kennedy "to deputize these Negro self-defense guards and send federal troops to occupy Alabama" (*Militant*, 23 September 1963). The role of federal troops, from the Detroit race riot of 1943 to the Detroit ghetto uprising of 1967, is to suppress and *disarm* the black people. Martial law means the rule of the military and the military only. The very suggestion that the capitalists' army might occupy Alabama in order to hold down the racists while deputizing armed blacks is a clear indication of the extent of the SWP's revisionism on the fundamental question of the nature of the capitalist state.

SELMA, 1965: The fight in Selma for black voter registration provoked a fierce racist onslaught. After weeks of racist violence, including attacks by state troopers on a demonstration and an attempted march to Montgomery, King and the Student Non-violent Co-ordinating Committee demanded that President Johnson send the army into Selma.

The now-reformist SWP/YSA, uncritically enthusing over the liberal civil rights leaders, hurled aside even the pretense of a revolutionary perspective and revealed its undisguised liberalism: "Instead of sending troops to Vietnam where they are trampling upon the rights and lives of the Vietnamese, troops should be sent to Selma and other parts of the South to protect the constitutional rights of Negroes" (*Militant*, 22 March 1965). This declaration is an open repudiation of Marxism. According to the SWP/YSA, the same troops--at that time the Marines and elite Special Forces!--who "are trampling upon the rights and lives of the Vietnamese" in far-away Asia can change their class character and "protect the constitutional rights of Negroes" if brought home and put under mass pressure.

But how did Uncle Sam's troops "protect" the Selma-to-Montgomery freedom march? One night, as the marchers

slept surrounded by the troops, a brick was thrown into the camp. According to all evidence and opinion, the brick could only have been thrown by one of the soldiers. Simply by luck was no one killed.

When the marchers finally reached Montgomery for the planned rally, the troops were precipitously withdrawn, leaving the marchers to make their return journey home defenseless. One of the marchers, Mrs. Viola Liuzzo, was murdered while shuttling marchers from Montgomery to Selma. The carload of racists who shot Liuzzo included Ku Klux Klansmen and...an F.B.I. agent, Gary Rowe! *This* is how the armed forces of the capitalist state "protect" the lives of those who struggle for the most elementary democratic rights. And the SWP/YSA wanted to unleash the brutalized, specially-trained killers of the Special Forces to "protect the constitutional rights of Negroes"! Furthermore, after the troops were withdrawn, a reign of terror was opened against blacks in Alabama and other parts of the South. Brother Camejo refers to the results of the troop policy as a "terrific blow to racism in the South."

At the time the SWP/YSA followed out its call for federal troops to its logical conclusion and advocated—yes, this was their position—a permanent military occupation of the South! The *Militant* (29 March 1965) with headline emphasis demanded, "U.S. Troops Should Be Kept in Alabama." Only hardened reformists who have repudiated the independent mobilization of workers and the oppressed for self-defense, who have abandoned the class-struggle perspective for securing democratic rights, who have cast aside any program for linking the civil rights struggle with militant labor strikes against Jim Crow, sharecroppers' struggles and unionizing drives, only these traitors can call for a military occupation and martial law by the army of capitalism.

Spartacist and the Troops

From its inception as a political tendency born in principled struggle against the revisionism of the SWP/YSA, the Spartacist League has consistently opposed calling for federal troops to intervene in the civil rights movement, ghetto rebellions and militant black struggles. While still in the SWP/YSA, the Revolutionary Tendency (precursor of the Spartacist League) indicated its opposition to the party's slogans, "Federal Troops to the South!" and "Kennedy—Deputize and Arm Birmingham Negroes!," in its basic minority resolution on the black question, "For Black Trotskyism" (*SWP Discussion Bulletin*, Vol. 24, No. 30, July 1963). The supporters of the

Revolutionary Tendency in the YSA similarly came out "for organized self-defense movements" and "against federal military intervention, which always supports the status quo" in their document, "The Negro Struggle and the Crisis of Leadership" (YSA *Discussion Bulletin*, Vol. 7, No. 5, August 1963).

Following our unprincipled expulsion from the SWP/YSA, the SL continued to call for organized self-defense and a class-struggle perspective for the black civil rights movement, at a time when the "official" civil rights leaderships and their "left" toadies were preaching pacifism and reliance on the government. The SL document "Black and Red" raised the slogan, "For a Workers United Front Against Federal Intervention," and declared: "The demand for organized self-defense must be counterposed to Federal intervention which preserves Southern 'law and order' and the racist status quo" (*Spartacist*, May-June 1967).

During the past months of mounting crisis in Boston, the SL and SYL have been the only outspoken and activist advocates of a labor/black defense force to insure the implementation and extension of the busing program and to protect the lives and democratic rights of black people. We have continually pointed out that such a defense force is both an urgent necessity and a realizable possibility. We have directed calls to Boston's pro-busing labor, black, community and socialist organizations to use their influence and resources to mobilize at once black people and their allies. The pent-up anger and readiness to act on the part of Boston's blacks are obvious; what is lacking is a militant leadership.

We have exposed the do-nothing, defeatist policy of the black liberals, who shook their heads in despair and wrung their hands in moral agony during the weeks of racist terror, but who abruptly demanded federal troops only after blacks began lashing out in retaliation and only after the residents of Columbia Point took matters into their own hands and organized a self-defense force. These liberals demanded police "protection" for Columbia Point; so the cops swept down on Columbia Point, occupied and vandalized the housing projects, beat and arrested blacks. Cop intervention ended the independent black defense effort, and kept the blacks "nonviolent." What the cops did to Columbia Point is just what federal troops would do to all black neighborhoods in Boston.

In the course of its panegyric for the liberals' strategy, the *Militant* feigns approval of the black defense initiative: "The development of such Black self-defense organizations may recur, and this would be a positive development. But meanwhile the problem of school desegregation

in Boston and the need for federal troops remains." If blacks, at literally the risk of their lives, can manage to organize self-defense groups while under police or military occupation, then the *Militant* perhaps can permit a detached nod of approval for such a "positive" development. But is the SWP/YSA actually *calling for* these groups? Absolutely not! The SWP/YSA "meanwhile" is concerned only with trying to climb into the lap of the liberals.

It is unclear if and when Ford will decide to move troops into Boston. The bourgeoisie has indicated its opposition to busing, and Ford may well believe that letting the Boston situation deteriorate will produce an anti-busing backlash among both whites and blacks. Furthermore, the Republicans had the November elections to worry about, and Ford certainly did not wish to add a military occupation of South Boston and a repression of the ghettos to the albatross of Watergate and the economy.

However, the racist mobilizations still continue, and the need for a pro-busing offensive grows ever more urgent. The liberal-SWP/YSA-CP stance of helpless reliance upon federal troops is a strategy for *defeat*. Mountains of letters to Congress and frequent passive-protest demonstrations will not change the *class character* of the bosses' cops and army. The SWP/YSA proposes to lead the oppressed into sure repression and a possible bloodbath in order to "expose" the Ford government.

The black masses and their allies must rely on their own organizations and power. They must force their leaderships to take action at once and begin to organize a labor/black defense force. Only such a mobilization of the workers and oppressed can insure the implementation of the busing plan, protect black people and rout the racists. The democratic rights and lives of black people in Boston must not be entrusted to the class enemy! ■

—reprinted from *Young Spartacus*, December 1974

Black Family Firebombed in Chicago

UAW Local Sets Up Labor/Black Defense Guard

CHICAGO, April 18—C.B. Dennis, black UAW union member, has been trying to move into the white neighborhood of Broadview. His house was firebombed and stoned repeatedly. But tonight, like every night for the past week, the Dennis family home is being protected by an integrated defense guard of his union brothers. Local 6 of the United Auto Workers, International Harvester, voted unanimously at the membership meeting Sunday to set up the defense guard.

At a time when there is a dramatic increase in racist terror against blacks all across the country, the UAW Local's action is a powerful example of what can be done to stop the nightriders. And it is the best possible answer to those who preach reliance on the bourgeois cops by hiding behind the despairing lament, "workers won't defend blacks against racist attacks—there's no solution except to call on the troops"!

The attacks, which have caused thousands of dollars' worth of damage to the house and prevented the family from moving in, are part of a pattern of terror against blacks in white areas here, where right-wingers have been trying to stir up race hatred. In another neighborhood on the Southwest Side, four black families have been forced to live under a virtual state of siege, with the National Socialist White

People's Party (Nazis) all but taking direct credit for the firebombings.

The first volunteers from Local 6, including Local president Norman Roth, were at posts outside the damaged house within hours of the union meeting. C.B. Dennis, who is a repairman at the Melrose Park IH plant and has been working there for 15 years, was interviewed at the house by *Workers Vanguard*. He said he had been unable to get adequate police protection.

"They said they would come by 20 minutes out of the hour. But that's no protection at all," Dennis told *WV*, observing that patrols had been by only once in two hours that night. "This is the best thing we could do," he said, referring to the volunteer guards, "I was really proud of the union today. I think it's a good thing." An older black worker who was listening agreed, saying he could recall no similar action by the Local in its history. He likened it to the defense activities of the anti-eviction campaigns in which he had participated in the 1930's.

The UAW Local's defense action received considerable attention in Chicago. Articles appeared in both daily papers on Monday, and Dennis and Local 6 officers were interviewed on two television stations Monday evening. At least three radio reports were also made.

On the second night, the union guards were heckled by passers-by in the area, and a neighbor two doors down shouted at them to "get the hell out" of there. Another white resident, however, had earlier come over to talk to Dennis for 20 minutes, expressing sympathy and pointing out that some of the rocks had hit his house as well.

It is clear that the racial polarization runs deep but the entire neighborhood has not been terrorized. Local 6 defense volunteers speak in terms of the need to prevent another Boston-type racist mobilization in Chicago. There have been no new attacks as the teams of union volunteers have been guarding the house daily. Members vow the guards will remain "as long as necessary" to ensure that the family is safely moved into the house.

The attacks on black families have mounted during an organizing offensive by fascist and racist groupings in Chicago. Besides the attacks on four black families on the Southwest Side, there were earlier attacks on other families in Broadview. The Nazi Party ran candidates for alderman in five wards in the last elections, and the Ku Klux Klan has also been actively organizing lately.

These scum thrive on the despair generated by heavy inflation and unemployment in the working class, and their

efforts to divide the workers along race lines can only benefit the employers. Resolute action such as that undertaken by Local 6 could, if followed through and adopted by the rest of the labor movement, prevent future attacks and quickly lay the tiny but deadly dangerous fascist movement in the grave where it belongs.

The third attack on the Dennis house, which occurred two days prior to the union meeting, particularly incensed many members of the Local. The motion to set up the volunteer union defense guards was made by a member of the Labor Struggle Caucus, which had distributed a newsletter in the plant before the meeting calling for a militant response to the wave of racist terror. The Labor Struggle Caucus is a grouping in Local 6 with a class-struggle program which has recently been active in successful struggles against a company leafletting ban in the plant and against a move to extend terms for local union officers to three years. Its resolution at the Sunday meeting supported the "struggle for integration of blacks in housing, education, and jobs," as "vital interests of the entire working class," and denounced reliance on the police, who "serve the employers and cannot be depended upon to defend the rights of blacks or of the trade unions." The motion also called for defense activities to be extended to the black families on the Southwest Side, as well as Broadview.

Following the meeting, the Local issued a special number of its newsletter. Although this was reportedly not very well distributed, a special meeting held Tuesday night for volunteers was attended by 25 members from all political groupings in the Local, as well as by a television crew, which filmed the entire proceedings. President Roth chaired and took a lot of criticism for the inefficient distribution of the special Local newsletter which, it was said, kept the meeting from being larger.

He also relented under pressure on his earlier objection to the formation of a special committee to organize the defense guards. A steering committee was then set up under the chairmanship of the by-laws committee chairman. It includes two members of the Labor Struggle Caucus, a member of the syndicalist Workers Voice group, and other Local members. Members of the steering committee immediately began signing up volunteers in the plant.

Support for the defense activity was forthcoming, at least verbally, from the UAW officialdom in the area, including regional director Robert Johnston. The special Local newsletter asserted, "These efforts are in accord with our UAW principles and policies."

On the other hand, the UAW officials seemed primarily concerned to get government officials to intervene, thereby relieving the union of its responsibility. At the Dennis house on Sunday night, Roth told *WV* of his intention "to exert every political pressure possible to try to get the authorities to do something." He further claimed that "In some instances, the police have given some protection."

Roth, who is a prominent supporter of Trade Unionists for Action and Democracy, the trade-union group backed by the reformist Communist Party, not surprisingly places confidence in the bosses' state. Yet neither courts, cops, troops nor National Guard will protect blacks against racist victimization. This can be clearly seen in the Boston situation, where the courts are conciliating the racists and have taken a giant step backward on the busing plan.

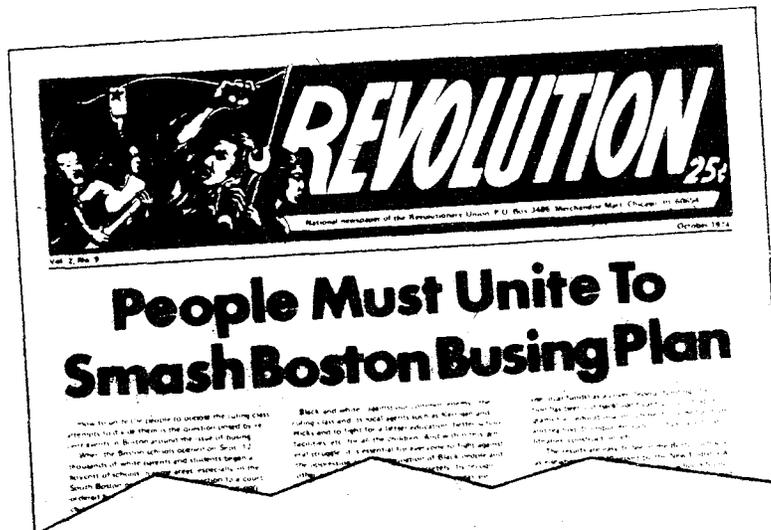
In Boston there have been two sharply counterposed lines on how to defend the endangered blacks from racist attack. On the one hand there are the liberals, joined by the Communist Party and Socialist Workers Party, who have called for federal troops. Against this dead-end reliance on the armed forces of the capitalist state, the Spartacist League has called for integrated working-class defense. Both in Chicago and Boston or elsewhere, labor/black defense guards could quickly eliminate racist terrorists, neutralize wavering elements in the white population and eventually defuse racist mobilizations.

The Local 6 action could be the start of a general initiation of militant, class-struggle response to racist terror in the Chicago area, but only if the whole Local, leadership included, works to undertake it seriously and spread the idea to other locals. If the Local 6 leadership instead spreads illusions in the state, the way will be left open for a worsening racial polarization. The guard must not be ended prematurely, on the advice or promise of the cops or city officials that defense will be provided by the state.

The recent action of the Local 6 members stands as an inspiring example for all trade unionists and black militants: black and white workers *can* unite and organize to fend off racist terror. It will take an all-sided fight for class-struggle policies and leadership throughout the labor movement to turn this example into the rule. But an important beginning has been made. ■

-reprinted from Workers Vanguard, 25 April 1975

Revolutionary Union Capitulates to Racism



The response of the so-called left to the Boston busing crisis has been no better than the liberals', and in the case of the Maoist Revolutionary Union (RU) even worse. The October issue of *Revolution* boasts the almost-unbelievable headline, "People Must Unite to Smash Boston Busing Plan"! In the most despicable capitulation to white racism, the lead article at great length and with great understanding seeks to "explain" all the motivations of the anti-busing school-boycotters, denouncing as "liberal" all talk of "backward, racist whites," denouncing as "reactionary" the "absurd line that the 'only issue' in the white boycott in South Boston is racism," and denouncing as "defeatist and divisive" the line that "the main issue now is racism." You see, only "some [!] white parents had been influenced by the racist arguments."

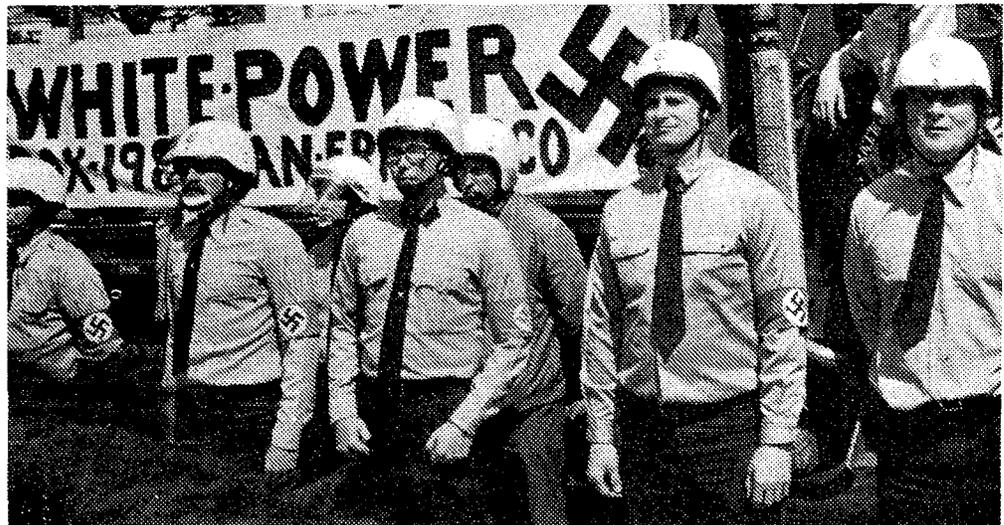
The RU denounces busing as an "issue which heightens the contradictions of people of different nationalities" and counterposes "community control" of the schools. But "community control"—the right of whites to keep blacks out of their schools and neighborhoods—is exactly what the racists are demanding in Boston! Because busing provokes the racists, the RU turns its back on the blacks in order to appease the white racists. In its disgusting workerist capitulation to backwardness in the working class, the RU has consistently refused to struggle against special oppression and for democratic rights of women (the Equal Rights Amendment) and blacks (busing). ■

—excerpted from "Stop Racist Terror in Boston!," Young Spartacus, November 1974

No Platform for Fascist Scum!

"If the enemy had known how weak we were, it would probably have reduced us to jelly.... It would have crushed in blood the very beginning of our work."

—Nazi leader Goebbels



YOUNG SPARTACUS

SYL Builds Anti-Nazi Demonstration

SAN FRANCISCO—On March 10 some 150 people responded to a clarion call for a mass demonstration to protest the scheduled appearance of Nazi party members on the San Francisco State University campus. Students as well as workers from the area joined the militant picket line which was organized by the "Ad Hoc Committee to Stop the Fascists," a united front initiated and energetically built by the Spartacus Youth League. The angry demonstrators not only physically confronted the Nazis, but succeeded in driving the fascist vermin off campus!

The Nazis (National Socialist White People's Party) had been

invited to present their "point of view" to a debate class, "Issues and Advocacy," conducted by Ted Keller, a left-liberal professor. When SYL members in the class learned of the invitation, the SYL at SF State immediately launched an all-out campaign for a demonstration against the appearance of these racist killers on campus. On February 28 the SYL distributed flyers and leaflets announcing the formation of a united-front "Ad Hoc Committee to Stop the Fascists" (CSF) and calling for a meeting to plan a protest demonstration around the demand, "NO PLATFORM FOR FASCISTS!" The SYL in addition made two presentations to Keller's class strongly arguing against "free speech" for degenerate, murderous, fascist slime.

How to Deal with Fascists

A fascist movement can mushroom in conditions of acute capitalist crisis when the working class is unable to throw off its pro-capitalist reformist misleaders and resolve the social impasse through socialist revolution. An extra-parliamentary extremist movement, fascism appeals to the frustrated desire of the petty bourgeoisie for economic stability and offers the bourgeoisie, as its last desperate resort, the ultimate weapon for smashing the workers movement. The Nazis are a paramilitary organization in the service of extreme capitalist reaction.

Unlike right-wing propaganda groups (John Birch Society), conservative bourgeois politicians (George Wallace) or reactionary academic ideologues (William Shockley), fascists like the Nazis and Ku Klux Klan are armed thugs in political garb who are dedicated above all to *action*: the genocide of racial, ethnic and religious minorities; the totalitarian suppression of bourgeois-democratic rights; and the annihilation of the organized socialist and labor movement. As long as they are still an isolated sect in this country, the Nazis sometimes pretend that they too are interested in "discussing" their "ideas." But smelling the stench of racist reaction, these scum are more brazen about raising their heads.

These maggots have swarmed to racially polarized Boston not to "discuss," but to foment the savage slaughter of black schoolchildren. Nazi propaganda for frenzied white racists is a *call to action*:

"Boating, Not Busing. Or should we do some KILLING? Should we cut off, root and branch, the satanic Jews and all their lackies who are stirring up the n-----s against us? ... There might be school buses going up in smoke all over the country."

—leaflet of National Socialist White People's Party (Bay Area)

In Los Angeles recently the National Socialist Liberation Front

has claimed credit for attacking leftist bookstores. Their "argument": dynamite.

Fascist movements grow not through political campaigning but through terror, murder, and eventually concentration camps and gas chambers. The Nazis win their arguments with blood and prove their points with genocide. They yearn for the day when they can exterminate their opponents and victims. We recognize no democratic rights for Nazis. There is nothing to debate with these racist monsters! Action must be met with action! The Nazis must be stopped!

As the Trotskyist *Transitional Program* spells out so forcefully, only a united, militant labor-led mobilization can deal decisively with the racist swine:

"The struggle against fascism does not start in the liberal editorial office but in the factory—and ends in the street. . . . In connection with every strike and street demonstration, it is imperative to propagate the necessity of creating *workers' groups for self-defense*. It is necessary to write this slogan into the program of the revolutionary wing of the trade unions. . . . It is necessary to advance the slogan of a *workers' militia* as the one serious guarantee for the inviolability of workers' organizations, meetings and press."

It is necessary, again in the words of the *Transitional Program*, "to inflict a series of tactical defeats upon the armed thugs of counter-revolution." Depending on the relationship of forces, left organizations or groups of militants in certain situations may correctly decide to take upon themselves the suppression of fascist meetings and demonstrations. But communists must dissuade anti-fascist militants from adventurist confrontationism which substitutes for the necessary perspective of struggling to mobilize the masses against the fascists.

We warn that no confidence should be placed in the bosses' cops to restrain or stop the fascist bands. Time after time the racist cops have demonstrated their sympathy and leniency toward the Nazis and KKK; there are frequently intimate links between fascists and the local police, especially in the South. Reliance upon the cops to disband and stop the fascists is an invitation to murder. These racist killers must be made to fear the consequences of creeping forth and spewing their poison!

United Front Gathers Support

Stressing the need for the largest possible mobilization, the SYL actively solicited endorsements for the CSF and commitments to participate in the disciplined demonstration from a broad range of student, left and labor organizations

on campus and in the Bay Area. In addition to the Spartacist League/SYL, endorsements were obtained from the Committee for Working Class Studies, Socialist League (Democratic-Centralist), Laney College Black Student Union, Center for Peace and Social Justice, Service Employees Union Local 411 (the SF State campus workers union), Committee for a Militant UAW/Local 1364, Militant Action Caucus of the CWA, the Militant Caucus/Local 6 and *Longshore Militant*/Local 10 of the ILWU, as well as individual, recognized labor militants.

The other self-proclaimed "socialist" organizations on campus responded to the principled united-front call of the growing CSF with either sectarian adventurism or cowardly abstentionism. The muddled Stalinites of the Progressive Labor Party (PL) did vigorously campaign in their own name to prevent the fascists from speaking on campus. Opposed to joining in united-front actions with Trotskyists, PL attempted to outmaneuver the CSF with hyper-militant rhetorical one-upmanship.

Echoing its Stalinist mentors who spurned the Trotskyists' call for a working-class united front against the Nazis in the early 1930's with the fatal "Third Period" position that the German Social Democrats and liberals were "social fascists," PL claimed that fascism is already in power today and thus there is no difference between the Nazis and SF State President Romberg. PL resorts to this "Third Period" Stalinist "go-it-alone" sectarianism and ultra-militant rhetoric to cover its abject Popular Front Stalinist class collaborationism: "fighting racism" by liquidating into liberal front groups to "fight" racist textbooks; "fighting" for 30-for-40 by running candidates in the Democratic Party primaries and petitioning for electoral referenda; and glorifying the imperialist Second World War as a peoples' war "to defeat Nazism." Prevented by their Stalinism from linking programmatically the fight against racial oppression with the struggle for socialist revolution, PL must stumble along with schizophrenic gyrations of reformism and ultra-leftism.

Although the hardened reformists of the Socialist Workers Party/Young Socialist Alliance (SWP/YSA) crow about opposing racism and fighting for civil rights, these cynical ex-Trotskyists are presently interested only in organizing respectable, pacifist conventions and desultory rallies for liberal politicians and bourgeois-legalistic organizations such as the NAACP. In the past the SWP/YSA liquidated into the various petty-bourgeois radical protest movements, declaring that "consistent" studentism, feminism and nationalism equal socialism. Lately, however, the line of the SWP/YSA appears to be that "consis-

tent" Uncle Tom liberalism equals socialism!

Thus, it should come as no surprise that these "socialists" simply ignored the campaign against the Nazis, the most vicious killers of black people. The problem with the "ostrich position," comrades of the SWP/YSA, is that when you stick your head in the sand, another part of your anatomy is quite prominent.

The feminists of the women's center at SF State refused to endorse the CSF, because a demonstration against the Nazis, whose slogan for women is *Kinder, Küche, Kirche* (children, the kitchen, the church), is supposedly a "male" tactic! The Pan Africanists, according to one of their members on campus, said they would let the whites fight it out. Their nationalism prevents the Pan Africanists from following the example of their black brothers at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill who mobilized and prevented KKK leader David Duke from performing there in January.

CSF Leads Militant Demonstration

The anti-Nazi demonstration called by the CSF drew some 150 students and workers into a well-disciplined picket line in front of the building where the Nazis were scheduled to appear. To their credit, supporters of PL joined the picket line, but the Revolutionary Student Brigade held its "own" tiny rally about 200 yards away. In order to protect its sub-reformist politics from any criticism or competing program, the RSB resorts to such theatrical self-exclusionism.

After the demonstration had been in progress for about 45 minutes and the Nazis still were nowhere in sight, some elements, who had refused to join the united-front steering committee, suddenly announced over a bullhorn that the demonstration should enter the building. This splitting tactic was irresponsible in the extreme, since a large number of people packed into the narrow corridors and small classroom would virtually be unable physically to defend themselves should there be an attack by the Nazis and cops.

The steering committee advised these demonstrators against such an ill-considered tactic, but nonetheless many students entered the building. They crowded into the corridor and packed Keller's classroom, beginning what was to be a several-hours long debate with Keller and the students in the class awaiting the Nazis. Keller announced that the Nazis would not appear and the class was cancelled.

When it was announced sometime later that the Nazis still had not arrived, the large SYL contingent left the area in order

FREE SPEECH ?

..or do
these
CREEPS
do your
thinking
for you?



NATIONAL SOCIALIST WHITE PEOPLE'S PARTY

Racist anti-communist garbage surreptitiously dropped on S.F. State.

to go directly to the Berkeley campus for an anti-ROTC demonstration scheduled for 2:00 p.m.

Fascist Filth Found

The dwindling crowd inside the building continued the anti-fascist chanting and arguments with the students who recognized the Nazis' "right" of free speech. The comings and goings of the press soon attracted their attention, and a rumor that the Nazis were somewhere in the building began to circulate.

Investigation soon revealed that in fact the fascists were in the building, hiding in a nearby office! (The administration later divulged that the Nazis had crept on campus without uniforms and other fascist paraphernalia a full hour before the demonstration had begun and then took refuge in their lair.)

The remaining group of demonstrators rushed to the room and began to pound on the barricaded door. A squad of campus and local cops were protecting the seven fascists inside. After some time, the door suddenly opened, and the Nazis, surrounded by a beefy cordon of pushing cops, made a bee line for their getaway van, waiting nearby with motor running.

Fortunately, several students were able to land a few blows to the scurrying rodents, and one was even flattened out on the pavement. In the melee one of these thugs clubbed a student with a portable fire extinguisher and then sprayed its chemical

contents in his face. Only with the eager aid of a rear guard of club-swinging cops were the fascists able to pile into their van and execute their escape.

Administration Prepares for Repression

For the next several days the campus and local press were filled with coverage, photographs and editorials on the demonstration. The SF State administration as well as some faculty and students have raised a hue and cry over the denial of "free speech" to the Nazis by the CSF and others. SF President Romberg has already begun an "investigation" into the demonstration, and the Faculty Academic Senate and Associated Students Judicial Committee have announced that they may hold hearings. Even Professor Keller has issued a 12(!)-page polemical attack on the SYL and PL which is strongly tinged with anti-communism.

The Dean of Student Affairs on March 17 sent letters to every student registered in the "Issues and Advocacy" class, soliciting "a statement which you feel may be helpful to us in our endeavor to prevent the interference of academic freedom." A formal complaint has already been filed against the SYL and PL with the Judicial Committee (*Zenger's*, 19 March 1975). Anti-left petitions are circulating and the Academic Freedom Committee has released a formal statement condemning the action. The administration is clearly preparing to attempt to prosecute and ban the SYL and PL.

The SYL issued a leaflet the day following the demonstration which strongly solidarized with the effort to pummel the fascists: "The entire Bay Area workers' movement should applaud the efforts of the students here at State for teaching the Nazis this well-deserved lesson." We declared that "The Spartacus Youth League is glad to accept responsibility as the initiators of the Ad Hoc Committee to Stop the Fascists which set up the picket line demonstration."

RSB Spits on Demonstration with Anti-Communism

When the anti-Nazi action galvanized the campus in an anti-radical reaction, the RSB rushed to "unite with the many" and let loose a vicious barrage of poisonous anti-communism against the SYL and PL. The RSB distributed a four-page leaflet which attacked

"the Trotskyite Spartacus Youth League (SYL) and the 'Progressive' Labor Party ('P'LP), who proclaim themselves the New Messiahs, THE leaders who have to either sucker, manipulate,

guilt trip, or intimidate the people into going along with them, whether it's about the Nazis or others."

This is nothing but a repetition by so-called "anti-imperialists" of the bosses' filthy slander that communists "sucker" and "manipulate," that is, *dupe*, their followers. This treacherous anti-communism will always be used to persecute and frame up communist militants.

These Maoists even stoop to *attack the SYL for having a working-class perspective!* The RSB hisses,

"the SYL also shows its contempt for the people, especially contempt for students, by calling on 'working-class elements,' using a 'workers-are-everything-students-are-nothing' line as a club to beat the student movement down."

The working-class politics of the SYL have thrown the RSB into an openly anti-working-class fit, which thoroughly exposes these self-styled "left" Maoists. Neither in this leaflet, nor in its leaflet for the demonstration, has the RSB as much as mentioned—not once!—the working class. To make itself acceptable to bourgeois public opinion, the RSB wallows in liberal-populism, always identifying politically with "the people."

The RSB has done everything to dissociate itself from the militant demonstration and everything to convince the campus that it is really with "the masses of students and American people":

"So in the guise of 'the Left,' both the 'P'LP and the SYL actually scare people away, pimping on the righteous anger students had about the brownshirts coming to campus and turning this anger into its opposite—anger against what people think are 'revolutionaries,' lumping the BRIGADE in the same camp."

We are not "pimping" revolutionaries like them!, cries the RSB. Anyone in the RSB serious about struggling to become a communist must reject this anti-communist pus and the Maoist syphilis which has produced it.

YSA's Finger-Wagging Liberalism

The YSA at SF State did absolutely nothing to protest the appearance of fascists on campus, but was quick on the draw when the militant demonstration presented itself as a target. In a letter to the campus press (*Zenger's*, 19 March 1975), the YSA blasted the anti-fascist demonstration as "unfortunate," "counterproductive" and a "disruption." What would the YSA have us do? The "only way" is: "To stop the Nazis from speaking, the campus majority has to be won to that point of view

through an educational campaign"! But the SWP/YSA has demonstrated that it has no commitment "to stop the Nazis from speaking" when in fact it has debated with the fascist KKK on television in Houston!

The letter points out that the SWP/YSA will fight fascist attacks, such as the recent Nazi bombing of their bookstore in Los Angeles, by appealing to the cops ("bring pressure on the Los Angeles authorities"). Reliance upon the fascists' "brothers in blue" is the *only* way these reformists respond to the racist killers. Yet the letter does state that the YSA will defend any anti-fascist demonstrator from possible reprisals.

No Reprisals!

The SYL has stood firm in the face of threatened repression and has initiated the "March 10 Defense Committee" to fight any reprisals taken against anyone—excluding the Nazis—charged in connection with the anti-fascist demonstration. Two administrators from the student affairs department attended the first defense meeting and indicated that they would not provide the SF State administration with any information that could potentially implicate any student in the demonstration. The SYL has held a forum on campus, has begun circulating a petition demanding no reprisals and has sent letters to scores of Bay Area trade unions appealing for support in the defense campaign. Professor Keller signed the defense petition and told SYL members that he plans to write a statement opposing reprisals. In the coming weeks the SYL will show the anti-fascist film about gruesome Nazi atrocities, "Night and Fog," as one means to build for a demonstration on campus.
NO REPRISALS! ■

—reprinted from Young Spartacus, April 1975

SWP/YSA Defends "Right" of Free Speech for Fascist Scum!

At San Francisco State University on March 10 a united-front demonstration initiated and largely built by the Spartacus Youth League under the slogan "No Platform for Fascists!" confronted and drove off campus a gang of Nazis, who unfortunately had been invited to present their fascist "ideas" before a speech class. The Young Socialist Alliance (YSA), youth group of the reformist Socialist Workers Party (SWP), not only did absolutely nothing to protest the appearance of the fascists, but chiming in with the administration even denounced the well-publicized militant demonstration as "unfortunate," "counter-productive" and a "disruption"!

During the night of April 23, the YSA's office at Cleveland State University was ransacked and vandalized by fascist hoodlums, who left behind threatening signs carrying racist, anti-semitic and anti-communist slogans. The SYL at CSU immediately called for a broad united-front protest demonstration around the slogans "For United Defense Against Fascist Attack!" and "Down With Fascist Scum!" The YSA not only refused to endorse or even participate in the April 29 demonstration held in its defense, but actively sought to sabotage it, attempting to dissuade endorsers from attending and harassing the SYL. Failing in this, the YSA dashed off an indignant letter to the campus press (*Cauldron*, 1 May), condemning the highly visible demonstration as "meaningless"! As its response the YSA called a press conference (the only press to attend was *Young Spartacus*), where once again these social democrats begged for the cops to protect them. [For an example of how the Cleveland cops "protect" civil liberties, see "Cleveland Killer Cops Gun Down Black Youth" in *YSp* No. 35, Sept. 1975.]

In the past period the SYL has sharply exposed as craven reformism and flabby civil libertarianism the SWP/YSA's opposition to militant actions against the fascists and its reliance upon the repressive arm of the bourgeois state for protection. Apparently feeling the sting of our lashing polemical criticism, the SWP/YSA in two lengthy articles (*Young Socialist*, July-August 1975, and *International Socialist Review*, August 1975) recently has attacked the Spartacist League and SYL, finally admitting and defending politically its demonstrated attitude toward anti-fascist struggle.

With the hoary phrases of liberalism and pacifism the SWP/YSA claims that since fascism is undemocratic, the consistent championing of "democracy" is the most effective means of combatting the fascist menace. These gas-bags and poltroons wax eloquent in opposition to any infringement of the alleged "rights" of the fascists, passionately arguing that

"an effective struggle against reactionary ideas and violence cannot be carried out if one begins by placing qualifications on democratic rights in the case of fascists.... Because of the importance of democratic rights to the oppressed, the denial of this right to racists or fascists can only backfire."

—*International Socialist Review*, August 1975

Thus, the SWP/YSA respects the alleged "rights" of free speech and assembly for fascists "without qualifications" (*Young Socialist*, July-August 1975). Period.

No Platform for Fascist Scum!

The Nazis, the Ku Klux Klan and other fascists are ultra-reactionary armed thugs in semi-political garb who mobilize for *action*: terrorization and genocide against black people and Jews, smashing of the labor movement, extermination of communists and totalitarian suppression of bourgeois-democratic rights and institutions. Unlike conservative bourgeois politicians (George Wallace), right-wing propaganda groups (John Birch Society) or reactionary academic charlatans (William Shockley), fascist gangs represent an extra-parliamentary, para-military extremist movement offering the bourgeoisie in a period of extreme capitalist crisis the ultimate weapon for smashing the workers movement.

Fascists are the sworn enemy of the working class and racial, ethnic and religious minorities. Fascists recruit and grow not through political campaigning, but through demonstrating in action their intentions and strength. Today these racist beasts torture and murder black people, lusting to herd millions of black victims into gas chambers tomorrow. Today the fascist sadists assault communists and even left-liberals, yearning

to fill concentration camps tomorrow. Fascist "speech" is a call for destroying all rights for the labor movement and annihilating black people and communists. While small in numbers today, the fascists even now are dangerous. The very fact that the fascists can rear their heads indicates a receptivity or tolerance for their presence.

Unlike vulgar democrats, Marxists recognize no "right" of free speech for fascists. The defense of the working class, gentlemen of the SWP/YSA, can be assured *only* if the labor movement "begins by placing qualifications on democratic rights in the case of fascists." Upholding the "right" of fascists to work for the destruction of the left and labor movement "can only backfire." The labor movement never has recognized the "right" of scabs to break strikes and starve out striking workers. Likewise, labor does not respect the "right" of fascists to pulverize working-class organizations and murder the oppressed.

For socialists, denial of "civil liberties" for murderous fascist gangs is a right of the labor movement, not the capitalist government. Any government ban against extremist armed groups always will be used as a bludgeon against the left, not the right. For every fascist persecuted by the state thousands of labor militants and leftists will be victimized.

The SWP/YSA lectures us on this truism—knowing full well that the SL/SYL has never once called upon the *state* to ban or otherwise curb the fascists—because these social democrats seek to present a government ban as the only alternative to recognizing "free speech for fascists." While championing the "rights" of fascists, the SWP/YSA on more than one occasion has appealed to the bourgeois authorities to deny democratic rights for the left! Most recently, the YSA at Wayne State University attempted to have the Progressive Labor Party stripped of its status as a recognized student organization and thrown off campus (see "YSA-Attempted Purge of PL Strengthens Repression," *Young Spartacus*, July-August 1975).

SWP vs. SWP

Throughout the 1930's, 1940's and 1950's, the SWP, then a genuinely revolutionary organization, continually warned against granting any "democratic rights" for fascists. In the 1930's the first Trotskyist youth organization in this country, the Spartacus Youth League (whose name we proudly have taken as our own), polemicized against the position of civil liberties "for all" advocated by the Social Democrats and many liberals. With regard to the fascists, the SYL called for "Immediate action to obstruct their 'civil rights' to assemble forces"

(*Young Spartacus*, 12 October 1934). In its resolution, "The Youth in the Struggle Against American Fascism" (*Young Spartacus*, October 1934), the SYL likewise boldly asserted, "Every right of the working class must be defended—every right of the Fascists must be taken away by us."

When in 1939 the SWP's call for a militant counterdemonstration to break up a fascist rally in Madison Square Garden brought out 50,000 people and sent the civil-libertarian guardians of "free speech for all" into a frenzy, the SWP responded with the article "Should Fascists Be Allowed the Right of Free Speech?" (*Socialist Appeal*, 3 March 1939), which concluded:

"The workers who spend all their time and energy in the abstract discussion of the Nazis' 'democratic rights'—to say nothing of working themselves into a lather in defense of these 'rights'—will end their discussion under a fascist club in a concentration camp.... The wailing and weeping about the

A Short History of Liberalism



TO THE POINT: SWP cartoon from Socialist Appeal, 1939.

Nazis' 'rights' can safely be left to the prissy Liberals and phoney Democrats. The self-preservation of the working class demands that it cut through all abstract chatter and smash the fascist gangs by decisive and relentless action."

Fascists Fear No "Exposure"

Today the SWP/YSA chatters that fascism should be combatted not by decisive and relentless action but by ideological exposure: "What is needed are actions that can demoralize the racists and politically isolate them by exposing the reactionary character of their ideas" (*Young Socialist*, July-August 1975). As a model of such action the SWP/YSA proudly points to the May 17 NAACP demonstration in Boston "in defense of the Constitution," claiming that as a result of this and the December

C. P. Recipe For Fighting Fascism!



SWP cartoon from *Socialist Appeal*, 1939.

14 demonstration "ROAR has experienced a decline in membership and influence" (*Young Socialist*, July-August 1975).

One can hardly imagine a more foolish strategy or a more brazen lie! In Boston the racists are not in retreat, but rather are on the offensive [see article in *Young Spartacus*, No. 35, Sept. 1975]. Far from "demoralizing" the racists, the May 17 rally was menacingly taunted by a small gang of self-confident fascists. The SWP/YSA marshals in fact protected the fascists from a formidable group of demonstrators, including supporters of the SL/SYL and trade-union militants, until the cops arrived to escort the fascists safely to the edge of the park. Shortly later, a large number of demonstrators, enraged by the fascist provocation, streamed toward the clot of fascists, driving them out of the area entirely.

As Trotsky suggested, when the relationship of forces is overwhelmingly against the fascists, anti-fascists should give the scum a good "education":

"The tactical, or if you will, 'technical,' task was quite simple—grab every fascist or every isolated group of fascists by their collars, acquaint them with the pavement a few times, strip them of their fascist insignia and documents, and without carrying things any further, leave them with their fright and a few good black and blue marks."

—reprinted in *Intercontinental Press*, 2 December 1974

But the only "actions" advocated by the SWP/YSA are those impotent protests called by the liberal NAACP and bourgeois politicians which the SWP/YSA can tail. Although repeatedly attacked by fascists, especially in Houston and Los Angeles, the SWP/YSA has refused to call for any protest actions or to attempt organizing self-defense measures, but instead has preached reliance on the cops for protection. In Houston, the SWP/YSA publicly proclaimed its refusal to resort to measures of armed self-defense and called upon the KKK-infested Houston police to "stop despicable Ku Klux Klan from roaming the streets," fostering the dangerous illusion that "the KKK is a cowardly group who will crawl back into their holes at the first sign of the police upholding the law against them" (SWP campaign press release, 5 March 1975).

The sermonizing and impotent "mass actions" pushed by the SWP/YSA today was the same strategy advocated by the Stalinists and sellout trade-union bureaucrats in the late 1930's for fighting Jersey City Mayor Frank ("I am the law") Hague. At the time SWP leader James P. Cannon devastated the arguments about "exposing the reactionary character of his ideas":

"Fascism fears no 'scandal' and is not to be bluffed. It has to be beaten down.

"It is not sufficient to denounce Hague as a violator of the Constitution and its Bill of Rights. These documents are sacred only for the dupes of capitalist propaganda, not for the real masters themselves. The workers in reality have only such rights as they are ready and able to defend with their own strength. Everything else under the subject of democratic rights is a lie. Hague, the authentic American fascist, answers all palaver with brutal force. For their part, the magnates of industry and finance, alarmed by labor's aggressiveness of the past few years, cannot fail to notice with satisfaction that all the arguments in court and all the pious sermons and editorials about the Constitution carry little weight against the fists and clubs of Hague's hoodlums. *Force is the argument of the advance guard of American fascism. Woe to the workers of America if they do not learn in time to talk the same language!*" [emphasis ours]

—*Socialist Appeal*, 9 July 1938

SWP Turns the Other Cheek

The oh-so-respectable SWP/YSA today is categorically opposed to using force against the fascists:

"Another argument used to justify a call for banning or physically breaking up reactionary meetings is that fascism can thereby be 'nipped in the bud,' or somehow stopped even before it gets started.

"For example, the *Young Spartacus*, publication of the SYL, carried an article in its June 1975 issue that prominently displayed in large letters a quote attributed to the German fascist leader Joseph Goebbels: 'If the enemy had known how weak we were, it would probably have reduced us to jelly . . . It would have crushed in blood the very beginning of our work.' The implication is that that is precisely what should be done today."

—*International Socialist Review*, August 1975

When still a revolutionary party, the SWP always contended that fascism could and must be "nipped in the bud." Trotsky hammered home this lesson over and over. When the workers who pummeled the fascists at the 1939 Madison Square Garden rally were denounced as "intolerant" by a chorus of liberals, the *Northwest Organizer* (2 March 1939), newspaper of the Trotskyist-led Teamsters Local 544 in Minneapolis, enthusiastically responded, "Three cheers for such intolerance!" As for the Goebbels quote, from which the SWP/YSA today shrinks aghast, this very same quotation—in bold print, mind you—was used by none other than SWP leader Joseph Hansen in a 1939 article on fighting fascism (*Socialist Appeal*, 14 July 1939), precisely for its "implication"!

For Workers Defense Guards!

The experience of the SWP's anti-fascist campaign in the late 1930's was codified in the *Transitional Program*, one of the founding programmatic documents of the Fourth International. Denouncing the reformist Social Democrats and Stalinist bureaucrats for hiding behind the "sacredness of democracy," the *Transitional Program* states:

"The struggle against fascism does not start in the liberal editorial office but in the factory—and ends in the street. . . . In connection with every strike and street demonstration, it is imperative to propagate the necessity of creating *workers' groups for self-defense*."

For years the SWP raised the slogan of workers defense guards as the answer to fascist attacks. "Form Workers Defense Committees!," "Labor Guard Must Answer Hague Menace," "Fight Fascism With Workers' Guards!" and "Answer Hague and Harvey with Workers' Defense" are the titles of just a few of the many agitational articles published in the *Socialist Appeal* and later in the *Militant*. Around the time of the 1939 Madison Square Garden rally, several substantial articles calling for workers defense guards were published which stand as powerful polemics against the SWP and NAACP today:

"...the best of the workers must be organized into Workers Defense Guards, prepared and trained to smash the fascist gangs. There is no other way. The fascist gangs do not believe in abiding by the results of the ballot-box, or by any other peaceful procedure. On the contrary, the fascists plan to come to power by physical violence against the labor movement and anti-fascists generally. To appeal to 'democracy' against the fascists is like trying to stop bullets with the biblical edict 'Thou Shalt Not Kill.'"

—*Socialist Appeal*, 14 March 1939

According to the SWP/YSA today, the only way to stop the fascist gangs is by staging parades which are led by Bible-quoting Uncle Toms and ballot-conscious bourgeois politicians and which are kept peaceful, even in the face of fascist provocation, by SWP/YSA marshals.

While the ability of socialist and labor militants to organize defense guards or successfully disperse the fascists depends on the level of class struggle and influence of the vanguard party, Trotskyists always explain in our propaganda and agitation that this strategy is the only way to guarantee the defense of the workers and black people from fascist and racist attacks. During the 1930's and 1940's, when the SWP had developed modest but significant roots in the labor movement,

the Trotskyists succeeded in organizing some union defense guards, most notably the Union Defense Guard organized in 1938 by Teamsters Local 544 in Minneapolis. Other unions also had organized squads against fascists such as the rural-based Silver Shirts; a Youngstown, Ohio, union defense guard had the honor of breaking up a meeting of this organization. The motto of the guard was "Offense is the best defense!" (reported in *Northwest Organizer*, 24 November 1938).

When forced to address the question of labor/black defense guards, the SWP/YSA today mutters that since such formations do not now exist it would be "irresponsible" to call for them. But even at the height of its isolation during the McCarthyite witchhunt, when the tasks of calling for and organizing workers defense guards was tenfold more difficult, the SWP still propagandistically explained the need for workers defense guards. A 1954 SWP pamphlet, "Racist Terror at Trumbull Park, Chicago," argued against the NAACP's criminal reliance on the bourgeois government, as follows:

"The Socialist Workers Party knows the fascist attack can be stopped at Trumbull Park. Not by depending on the bosses' representatives in City Hall—but by depending on the workers. No confidence in the bosses! No confidence in the bosses' parties! Confidence in a workers' demonstration! Confidence in a workers' defense committee!"

Today the SWP/YSA "answers" fascist attacks by preaching confidence in the bosses' state and by denouncing independent working-class action. This "answer" would bring nothing less than defeat for the workers movement, including the reformist SWP/YSA. ■

—reprinted from *Young Spartacus*, September 1975

Should Fascists Be Allowed the Right of Free Speech?

A Working Class Point of View on the Question That Was
Brought to the Fore Again by the Professional Democrats
When the Nazis Mobilized at the Garden

—Reprinted from
the *Socialist Appeal*,
3 March 1939

It seems that the only point of importance that the Professional Liberals and Democrats could see in the big mobilization of the Nazis at Madison Square Garden last week, was their "right of free speech and assembly."

Mayor LaGuardia kept reiterating emphatically that his attachment to Democracy compelled him to grant the Fascists the right to hold their meeting and provide them with extraordinary police protection.

The American Civil Liberties Union rushed into print to insist that the right of free speech be extended to the Hitlerites.

One of the numerous committees of the Jewish bourgeoisie, anxious to demonstrate that it loves fairness above all else, did likewise.

Even the wretched little Jewish anarchist weekly published in New York indignantly reproached the Trotskyists for the

lack of sense in "demanding the right of free speech and assembly for oneself and at the same time trying to prevent the freedom of speech of our opponents..."

Freedom for Nazis But Not for Pickets

Before going further into the consideration of the question of "free speech for Fascists," it is interesting and important to record the fact that all the above-mentioned who showed such touching concern for the "democratic rights" of the Nazis, are entirely unconcerned with the brutal police suppression of the picketing rights of the workers who assembled outside the Garden.

The Mayor simply refused to see a delegation which came to protest against the violence of the police who rode down and slugged the picketers.

The American Civil Liberties Union, apparently exhausted by its noble efforts in behalf of the Nazis, didn't utter a peep about the democratic rights of free speech, assembly and picketing being denied the 50,000 anti-Fascists who came to protest the Nazi rally. Ditto for the Jewish committee.

As for the anarchist Freie Arbeiter Stimme, it says not a word about the police assaults, but villainously insinuates that the Terrible Trotskyists were really at fault because, Mr. Police Commissioner, they planned a violent attack on the Nazis who were innocently celebrating Washington's Birthday. Unbelievable, but here are its exact words: "But there are times when people who endeavor to do social work, must reflect ten times, a hundred times, before they come out with an appeal for acts of violence."

What the Problem Really Involves

The question of "democratic rights for the Nazis" cannot be resolved on the basis of Liberal phrasemongers. All such a discussion can produce is a bewildering tangle of words and abstractions. At a more decisive stage, as all recent experience has proved, it produces a first class disaster not only for the working class but also for the Professional Liberals and Democrats themselves.

How many of them, indeed, are there in concentration camps, in prison and in exile who are continuing the thoroughly futile and abstract discussion over whether or not the Fascist gangsters should be granted the "democratic rights of free speech and assembly"!

And what is most decisive—this is the point which leads us directly to a solution of the problem that seems to agitate so

many people—is the fact that in Italy, in Germany, in Austria, in Czechoslovakia, in Spain, the Democrats were so concerned with preserving the "rights" of the Fascists that they concentrated all their attacks and repressive measures upon those workers and those labor organization which sought to conduct a militant struggle against the Fascists and for the preservation and extension of their truly democratic rights and institutions.

It is when the bourgeois "democrats" like Giolitti in Italy and Bruening in Germany, had done all in their power to smash the most progressive and active sections of the working class—as LaGuardia and his police tried to do on a smaller scale in New York last week—that the Fascists concluded successfully their march to totalitarian power. Whoever forgets this important lesson from abroad, is a fool. Whoever tries to keep others ignorant of this lesson, is a rogue.

A Simple Example

Let us take a simple example which every worker has experienced dozens of times.

A strike is called. The authorities promptly jump into the situation in order to protect the "democratic rights" of the scabs and the company gunmen who guard them. The "right to work" of the scab, which is guaranteed by the capitalist government, amounts in reality to his "right" to starve out the striking workers and reduce them to helpless pawns of the employers.

Millions of workers have learned the futility and deceptiveness of the academic discussion of the scab's "democratic rights," as well as of appealing to the government and its police to "arbitrate" the dispute involved. They try to solve the question, as they must, in the course of struggle. The workers throw their picket-lines around the struck plant. The conflict between the scab's "right" to break a strike and the workers' right to live, is also settled on the course of struggle—in favor of those who plan better, organize better, and fight better.

Same Rule Applies on Broader Scene

The same rule applies in the struggle against the much bigger scab movement that Fascism represents.

The workers who spend all their time and energy in the abstract discussion of the Nazis' "democratic rights"—to say nothing of working themselves into a lather in defense of these "rights"—will end their discussion under a Fascist club in a concentration camp.

The workers who delude themselves and waste their time

begging the capitalist Democrats in office to "act" against the Fascists, will end up in the same place, just as the workers of Italy, Germany and Austria did.

The workers have more vital concerns. They are and should be interested in defending and expanding their democratic rights. But not in any abstract sense. These rights are the concrete rights of free speech, assembly, press, the right to organize, strike and picket, without which an independent working class simply cannot exist.

A decaying capitalism—of which Fascism is only a natural product—seeks constantly to restrict and destroy these rights, which are not truly genuine even in "normal" times. These rights can only be defended from the assaults of capitalism and its ugly offspring, Fascism, in the same way in which they were first acquired: by the tireless, aggressive, unbending, independent struggle of the working class.

The wailing and weeping about the Nazis' "rights" can safely be left to the prissy Liberals and the phoney Democrats.

The self-preservation of the working class demands that it cut through all abstract chatter and smash the Fascist gangs by decisive and relentless action. ■

1,780 LaGuardia Cops Protect Nazis from Workers' Wrath in Brutal Attack on Demonstrators

—Reprinted from
the *Socialist Appeal*,
24 February 1939

An imposing, fighting demonstration of fifty thousand workers assembled near Madison Square Garden on Monday evening to protest the first big fascist mobilization in New York City.

In addition to the fifty thousand demonstrators who responded to the call of the Socialist Workers Party for a labor rally against the fascist concentration, official police estimates given to the press counted another fifty thousand among the spectators. With few exceptions, the latter made clear their sympathy with the aims and slogans of the demonstrating thousands. With a brutality recalling the days of Czarist Cossacks, 1,780 of Mayor LaGuardia's police, the largest number of cops ever collected in the city against a single demonstration, slugged and trampled under horses' hooves scores of workers in an unsuccessful attempt to break up the demonstration. From 6 pm until 11, the workers engaged in a series of bitter clashes with the police.

Size Exceeds All Hopes

The size of the workers' counter-demonstration far exceeded

the expectations of even the most optimistic.

Efforts had been made on all hands, prior to the Nazi meeting, to minimize the significance of the call issued by the Socialist Workers Party, to smother it by a campaign of silence, and to sabotage it directly.

Supercilious critics of the "Trotskyists" in the social-democratic camp sought to dispose of the counter-demonstration by ridicule and disdainful talk of our alleged insignificance. Neither the Socialist Party of Norman Thomas nor the Social-Democratic Federation would take any cognizance of the call for the demonstration, much less endorse it. They were nowhere to be found in the demonstration.

CP Role Despicable

The Stalinists played a particularly despicable role, which aroused widespread bewilderment and confusion in their own ranks, which contain thousands of workers who really want to fight against Fascism.

On the day of the demonstration, all that the Daily Worker had to say was its report of a speech in favor of democracy by acting Mayor Newbold Morris. Not a single word about the "Trotskyists," or their call. It would have been a little embarrassing even to such brazen pen-slaves as Stalin employs in New York to write, on this occasion, diatribes against the "Trotsky-fascists"!...

Rank and File Comes

Rank and file Stalinists, perplexed and irritated by the criminal sabotage of their officialdom, but nevertheless determined to demonstrate "unofficially" against the Nazis, whom they realize to be the menace they are, came to our rally by the thousands.

No less gratifying was the fact that one of the banners borne in the demonstration signified that the youth organization of the Thomasite Socialist Party had come to the anti-Nazi rally in spite of the shabby indifference of the party elders.

Equally inspiring was the contingent of Negro workers who came spontaneously to the tumultuous gathering, bearing their own posters and placards, including one signed by the Universal Negro Improvement Association....

Thousands Cheer SWP

The placards and posters of the Socialist Workers Party were uplifted amid the cheers of thousands. Almost simultan-

ously, on both streets, which by this time were choked to capacity by huge crowds reaching from Broadway to 8th Avenue, a spontaneous drive was launched to get through the police lines and into the immediate Garden area.

Action began on 48th Street. From the corner of 8th Avenue where a solid line of mounted cops was stationed, stirrup to stirrup, they made a furious attack on the assembled demonstrators. Moving in both directions, one group of cops trampled down a throng of patriotic war veterans and cut their big American flag to ribbons, while another group smashed brutally into the mass of workers.

Masses Reform Ranks

Although the Cossacks made repeated sallies into the workers' crowd, the mass formed and reformed, stoutly determined to hold their own until they gathered sufficient strength to exercise their right to assemble and to picket whether the cops granted it or not....

...even a large gathering of workers cannot easily attain its objective unless these workers have been organized thoroughly in advance and trained to act in sharp coordination. It was evident, in other words, that for the complete success of such a demonstration a militant, organized Workers Defense Guard is indispensable....

Cops Attack

Just as the head of the march reached 47th Street, it ran smack into a newly-formed line of cops. Without a word of warning, they plunged into the parade, mounted cops in the lead, with rows of foot cops behind them. The horses were driven straight into the ranks of the marchers, first in the center of the street and then on the sidewalks. Shop windows were shattered to smithereens, and workers wounded by the jagged splinters. Others went down under the horses, as is so graphically revealed by the sensational photographs which were published in the press. Clubs were drawn and swung freely and viciously.

This was not in Czarist Moscow, in Hitler's Berlin or Mussolini's Rome. No! This took place in the domain of "democratic" New York, under the administration of "progressive" Mayor LaGuardia, successful candidate of the American Labor Party in the last election!

Notwithstanding the assault, the lines of the march were still re-formed. The parade turned down 47th Street and proceeded once more to Broadway. There a fresh attempt was

made to organize a meeting at the Duffy Monument. But another police concentration was on hand and a violent struggle ensued.

The workers refused to be shoved around. They had seen many of their comrades seriously injured and beaten. When the police sought to disperse the marchers, they encountered the stiffest resistance.

March Terminates

Finally, after breaking through the police line, the crowd drove through to 49th Street, where the march was terminated by an announcement from an SWP speaker whom the police, helplessly trying to break through the firm block of workers, sought in vain to reach so that he could be torn down from the taxicab he had mounted in order to address the marchers...■

Ohio Union Guard Routs Fascists

Reprinted from
the *Northwest Organizer*,
24 November 1938

A company of union defense guards, made up of unionists from Youngstown, Ohio, had the honor of leading the first victorious assault on the fascist Silver Shirts when the boss-supported labor-haters sought to hold a meeting last Thursday in Sharon.

Sharon is 14 miles from Youngstown. Roy Zachary, national commander of the Silver Shirts, appeared in Sharon Thursday to speak before a scheduled meeting of his group.

The Silver Shirts had arranged some time ago to hold their meeting in the local Moose Hall, but without announcing the sponsorship of the meeting. When the Silver Shirts arrived around 8 p.m., lodge officers revoked the permit for the meeting.

A fascist who had wormed his way into the Carpenters' union then suggested that the meeting be held in the nearby Carpenters' Hall. The Silver Shirts went there and started their meeting.

The meeting had no sooner got under way than 10 carloads of union guards arrived from Youngstown, dashed up the stairs and stormed the meeting.

Storm the Hall

As the doors and windows were being battered down, several squads of cops rushed in to protect the Silver Shirts. The union guards circled the building and prepared to storm it from the rear. At this point, two officials of the Carpenters

Union arrived and ordered the Silver Shirts out of the building.

Cops Protect Fascists

Quaking, the Silver Shirts quickly stole out of the building and were escorted to their cars by the cops as the union pickets hurled their hatred at the local Hitlerites.

"Union members in this area," writes one of the union guards, "are determined that the Silver Shirts shall hold no meetings. The effectiveness of our swift action in the Sharon case is shown by the fact that the Silver Shirts called off a scheduled meeting in Newcastle, Pennsylvania, the following night. Definite steps are being taken to organize union defense squads after the pattern of the Minneapolis unions for the protection of the union movement against any attacks from the employers' stooge vigilante organization, the Silver Shirts. Our motto is 'Offense is the best defense!'"

The stalwart union defense guards of Youngstown, Ohio, have given a magnificent and inspiring demonstration of labor's resolve that the United States shall not go the way of Germany, Italy, Austria and the Balkans. Labor everywhere must energetically set about to build the union defense guard and smash the Silver Shirted rats wherever they show their heads. We hail the Youngstown union guard! ■

Minneapolis Picket Line Smashes Fascist Rally

—Reprinted from the
Militant, 31 August 1946

Minneapolis, Minn., Aug. 22—A united labor movement stopped Fascist Gerald L.K. Smith from speaking last night in Minneapolis. More than 1,500 pickets from AFL, CIO and Railroad unions, along with members of veterans, Jewish, Negro and working class political organizations, including the Socialist Workers Party, rallied in a fighting mass demonstration against America's No. 1 fascist leader.

When Smith's goons assaulted several pickets outside the fascists' meeting place at the Leamington Hotel, the aroused workers stormed the meeting hall and routed Smith and his followers in a pitched battle. . . .

"Stop Fascism!"

Scores of banners carried by the pickets had been distributed by the united labor committee. They carried such slogans as: "Race Hatred is Fascism;" "Stop Fascism and G.L.K. Smith;" "Don't Be A Sucker For Fascists;" "Don't Support Hitler's Agent—Keep Away." By agreement of the committee in charge, each organization carried only one placard.

Among the organizations carrying their own banners were the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; the Workers Defense League; the Minneapolis AFL Central Labor Union; the Minneapolis AFL Building Trades Council; the American Veterans Committee; the American

Youth for Democracy; the Socialist Workers Party; the Communist Party; and the Minneapolis Jewish Action Committee.

Prominent in the picket line was the banner of the Socialist Workers Party proclaiming: "American Workers Do Not Want A Hitler—STOP Gerald L. K. Smith!"...

Storming the Hall

As the first pickets reached the hotel, some of the Smith goons attempted to break up the line. Several of the pickets were attacked and knocked to the sidewalk. When the attackers fled into the hotel, the pickets stormed in after them.

Surging through the lobby, the pickets were met by a knot of fascists who attempted to bar the way to the ballroom where the meeting was to be held. With a mighty push, the Smith supporters were brushed aside and the pickets plunged on like a great tidal wave toward the meeting hall.

Charging through a barricade of chairs which the fascists had thrown up to prevent the pickets from entering the hall, the shouting mass of labor anti-fascists made their way into the ballroom. In their frantic retreat, the fascists left broken chairs, tables, lamps and mirrors in their wake. Dozens of Smith's supporters fled through the windows. Those remaining in the hall scuttled to one corner of the room and huddled there.

Workers Take Over

At the call of the picket captain, Walter Frank, all the pickets were seated. Frank's announcement that no Smith meeting would be held was greeted with resounding cheers. He reported that the hotel manager had refused to let Smith's meeting take place and ordered the fascists out, since the ballroom had been obtained under false pretenses. One of Smith's followers had rented the hall in the name of the "Northwest Pioneers."

The assembled pickets were then instructed to march in a body to the Minneapolis courthouse where an anti-fascist rally would be held. A rearguard of pickets was left at the hotel to see that instructions of the manager were carried out.

Smith came out of hiding only after the pickets left. He attempted to hold a meeting in the hotel lobby but only a handful of people remained. In one of his usual attacks on the labor movement and minorities, Smith declared to his followers that the demonstration was the work of "Jewish terrorists and Communists."... ■

Fascism: How to Fight It and How Not to Fight It

On 15 June 1974 London's Red Lion Square witnessed one of the bloodiest confrontations between police and left-wing forces in recent British history. Countless demonstrators were beaten with police truncheons, a number were trampled under mounted patrols, and one young man, Kevin Gately, was killed by the cops, his head so brutally battered that he died of a cerebral hemorrhage. The occasion was a protest against a rally scheduled by the fascist-inspired National Front.

The NF is one of many extreme-rightist organizations that have been surfacing and spreading in Europe during recent months. Their breeding ground is the fear of economic ruin, in particular an intensified competition for jobs in the wake of a worldwide capitalist economic slump.

As in the past, one of the common fascist themes is race hatred against Jews, blacks and now immigrant workers. Former National Front führer John Tyndall was quoted in 1969 as saying: "the Jew is a poisonous maggot feeding on a body in an advanced state of decay" (*Sunday Times*, 30 March 1969). Along with NF national organizer Martin Webster and others in the group's leadership, Tyndall was during the early 1960's a member of the now-defunct British National Socialist Movement, which called for "deportation of all non-Aryans" from Britain.

While many of these groups seek to put on respectable airs, their aim is to recruit petty-bourgeois and lumpen elements for the purpose of brutally smashing "the reds" and organized labor. As the history of the rise of Nazism tragically demonstrated, it is literally a life-and-death matter for the workers

movement to crush such reactionary paramilitary organizations while they are still weak.

With the growth of the NF in recent years (it polled 113,000 votes in last October's parliamentary elections), many leftists and labor militants have understood the need to stop this racist anti-communist outfit. The occasion for their protest last June was a National Front meeting against the Labour Party government's decision to grant amnesty to persons deemed "illegal immigrants" under the discriminatory 1971 Immigration Act.

Police Riot at Red Lion Square

On the day of the rally, the 1,500 NF marchers drew up in military formation, drums beating and Union Jacks Flying. Many of the flags were mounted on steel-pointed poles, some of the marchers were dressed in black shirts while others wore army surplus uniforms. A counterdemonstration of about 1,000 was organized by the Communist Party (CP) and Liberation, with contingents of the International Socialists (IS) and International Marxist Group (IMG).

Trouble began as the anti-fascist demonstrators approached Red Lion Square, occupied (according to the IS account) by about 500 police including mounted patrols. The bourgeois press and police claim the marchers were told in advance to make a right turn as they entered the square, moving away from the meeting hall where the NF rally was to take place. The left organizations say they were told no such thing. In any case it is clear that a section of the march, with the IMG toward the front, sought to break through the police lines to get to Conway Hall.

The police thereupon launched a baton charge, kicking and punching their way into the crowd. As the momentum of the march carried more people into the square, units of the elite Special Patrol Group, notorious for smashing workers' picket lines, were brought in. They formed a wedge and drove through the crowd, splitting it in two.

The fighting intensified as they cornered one section of the marchers in a side street. Then the arrests began. Blood-soaked demonstrators were dragged by their hair to waiting police vans and several bodies were left lying in the square, among them Kevin Gately. Some of the remaining protesters regrouped on the side street and jeered the NF marchers, who were now approaching from a different direction. After a pause of about ten minutes, the police suddenly launched a mounted charge against the leftists, a savage and totally unprovoked attack. The National Front column looked on jubilantly, then paraded triumphantly into Red Lion Square cheer-

ing the police and chanting, "We got to get the reds!"

The cops' vicious attack, including an unprovoked horse charge and the death of Kevin Gately, are the responsibility of the Wilson government. Gately's funeral drew thousands of angry marchers and the wanton police assault has been vigorously condemned by numerous socialist and union organizations. Yet, incredibly, the government has sought to blame the left, particularly the IMG, for the violence! The recently published Scarman Tribunal report rejected most charges of police brutality and denied any responsibility of the cops in Gately's death. This is in spite of the fact that the demonstrators used no weapons, only the police had instruments which could have caused the head wounds (truncheons and horses' hooves), and there were witnesses to the beating. This "report" is a shameless whitewash of what was in fact a police riot.

However, our proletarian solidarity with the victims of bourgeois "law and order" must not be an excuse to cover up serious errors committed by some leaders of the anti-fascist demonstration at Red Lion Square. It is not enough to want to fight fascists—one must know how to do it. A New Left policy of confrontation with police who obviously intended to defend the National Front is not the way.

There is no doubt that the IMG sought to break through police lines in order to arrive in front of the meeting hall. Jackie Stevens, a member of the IMG, gave this report: "We came across a line of police, and behind them were mounted police. When we tried to get through to Conway Hall, the police drew their batons and charged..." (*Intercontinental Press*, 24 June 1974).

It is less clear why the IMG took this dangerously mistaken step. But whatever the prior arrangements with the police; whether demonstrators had made plans beforehand or simply fell into a police trap; if it was bravado or confusion—in any case, the decision to try to push through the police lines was a disastrous move. The fact that the demonstrators lacked any means to defend themselves from the cops' murderous onslaught, while it refutes police theories of a conspiracy to attack the police, only makes this move all the more grievously wrong.

Marxists do not uphold a spurious "right" of fascists to freedom of speech; we call on the labor movement to mobilize to prevent the reactionary terror gangs from spewing out their race-hate poison in mass rallies and by provocations such as their marches in military uniform. But to prevent them from speaking through militant mass action requires a favorable balance of forces—something that was obviously not present in Red Lion Square.

LEON TROTSKY ON FIGHTING FASCISTS:

"In this period it is very important to distinguish between the fascists and the state. The state is not yet ready to subordinate itself to the fascists; it wants to 'arbitrate.'...Our strategic task is to increase these hesitations and apprehensions on the part of the 'arbiter,' its army and its police. How? By showing that we are stronger than the fascists, that is, by giving them a good beating in full view of this arbiter without, as long as we are not absolutely forced to, directly taking on the state itself. That is the whole point."

—reprinted in *Intercontinental Press*,
2 December 1974

Yes, 20,000 workers could, and should, have prevented the NF from holding its racist meeting. The failure of the unions to mobilize against these anti-labor scum is criminal. But this betrayal cannot be corrected by false heroics, sending several score demonstrators against well-equipped riot police. Not only was one militant killed and many injured, but the National Front scored a significant publicity victory as a result.

"Far Left" Battles Cops in Paris

Unfortunately, such confrontationism is not an isolated phenomenon. In France, while the Stalinists and social democrats systematically abstain from mobilizing the working class against the fascists, the fake "Trotskyists" of the United Secretariat (of which the IMG is the British affiliate) have taken a different approach: adventurist clashes with police protecting the fascists. The classic case of this substitutionism occurred on June 21, 1973.

On that date the Ligue Communiste (now Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire), French section of the USec, organized a counterdemonstration against a rally by the fascist Ordre

Nouveau ("New Order"). The ON had for some time been campaigning against "wildcat immigration" with virulently racist rhetoric, and had succeeded in provoking assaults on immigrant workers. They planned to highlight this campaign nationally with a mass rally at the Mutualité meeting hall in Paris.

While traditionally the Paris police had not mobilized heavily in conflicts between the right and left, this time they clearly were preparing to defend Ordre Nouveau. First they looked on as the ON turned the meeting hall into an armed camp, moving in van loads of iron pipes, clubs and other assorted weaponry. Then, by the Ligue Communiste's own report, the Mutualité was surrounded by 2,000 police, a veritable army to protect the fascists, waiting for the "far left" demonstrators to make the slightest move.

The LC, which early in the day realized that the police were ready to break up the anti-fascist demonstration, encouraged people to come to the march prepared for a confrontation. The leftists were heavily armed with clubs and molotov cocktails. Thus it was clear from the beginning that the Ligue fully expected a bash with the cops—a battle which, however, they could not possibly win without massive contingents of workers and left militants from all quarters.

When the police cordoned off the area around the hall they were bombarded by incendiaries. The anti-fascist demonstrators then broke up into small groups and long into the night isolated clashes continued throughout the area. While there was no clear military defeat of the leftists, they were unable to do more than harass the cops and did not stop the fascists. The next day, Ligue headquarters were occupied by the police, 25 of its supporters were arrested and the organization was outlawed.

The Spartacist League immediately and vigorously protested this viciously anti-democratic government attack and called for united defense of the Ligue. But we also criticized its adventurist tactics:

"The Trotskyist movement has a long history of resistance to fascist groups, including attacking and dispersing fascist meetings.... In this case, however, the presence of massive police force made the relation of forces unfavorable to the left. It would appear that the Ligue Communiste recklessly entered into an adventurist confrontation by attempting to take on the armed power of the state under circumstances which could lead only to the defeat of the left. The correct tactic, given the government's authorization of the meeting, was to

mount a campaign calling on the mass workers organizations . . . to mobilize tens of thousands of their members to prevent the fascist meeting. In their absence, the Ligue could certainly have organized a mass protest demonstration. This is not the same thing, however, as a futile attempt to overwhelm the police with 1,000 youths."

—"Repeal the Ban on the French Ligue Communiste," *WV*
No. 25, 20 July 1973

Portugal: A Hair's Breadth from Disaster

Another instance of stupid guerrillaist confrontation tactics occurred earlier this year in Portugal, where it could easily have had disastrous consequences in an explosive pre-revolutionary situation. On the night of January 25-26 several thousand youth and workers in the northern city of Porto surrounded a meeting hall where the rightist Social Democratic Center (CDS) was holding its national congress. This party's leaders include numerous former officials of the Salazar-Caetano dictatorship.

Four leftist organizations—LUAR, MES, PRP, and LCI—called a demonstration in front of the meeting hall. Their joint communiqué merely announced a protest action. After an hour, however, a second demonstration arrived on the scene, this one led by the OCMLP (Portuguese Communist Organization Marxist-Leninist, a left-Maoist group), which in an attempt to stop the congress proceedings attacked the paramilitary police who were protecting the building (*Esquerda Socialista*, 28 January).

This infantile "heroic" gesture led to baton charges by the special police and a tear gas barrage followed by shots, leaving a dozen demonstrators injured, some seriously. The leftists' only means of defense was to hurl bricks. Then beginning around 8 p.m. the regional military commander sent in several army units. The officer in charge asked the CDS to end the meeting (which it did), while the ranks outside fraternized with the demonstrators.

Due to the hostile attitude of the troops, rightist politicians in the Crystal Palace were afraid to leave the building, however, and during the early morning hours a second paramilitary police unit attacked on horse and in personnel carriers. Soldiers reportedly resisted the police assault. Finally, at 7 a.m. parachutists from a base commanded by conservative officers managed to extract the besieged reactionaries (*Luta Popular*, 2 February; *Revolução*, 7 February).

A demonstration against the CDS congress, particularly if attended by large numbers of workers, could have been useful in exposing the viciously anti-working-class and anti-democratic character of this ostensibly moderate party, which is in reality a front for Salazarist forces. Massive militant action by the labor movement in response to open counterrevolutionary activity by such a group could put it out of business.

But the attempt to stop the congress by launching a chaotic unarmed crowd against police guards was perilously dangerous adventurism. Although the CDS did call off its meeting, this was due to the attitude taken by the troop commanders, not to a few hundred demonstrators. And the armed forces' action could very easily have been the opposite, leading to a bloodbath of the anti-fascist militants.

(Although there is great ferment in the army and navy, most of the ranks still have confidence in the "progressive" officers of the Armed Forces Movement. It was by no means assured, or even probable, that the soldiers would have fraternized with anti-CDS demonstrators if explicitly ordered not to. On November 4 of last year, troops commanded by the most leftist officers of the Armed Forces Movement arrested the top leadership of another Maoist group, the MRPP, for attacking a CDS local office.)

A strong show of force against the "far leftists" on January 25-26 would have greatly strengthened reactionary elements in the military who at the time were trying to oust the more leftist top officers, in order to then crush the organized workers movement. The action initiated by the OCMLP-led demonstrators could have sparked a counterrevolutionary mobilization.

Sowing Dangerous Democratic Illusions

It was characteristic of the complacent reformism of the Stalinists and social democrats in the mid and late 1930's that they sought to pressure the bourgeois state into checking the fascists. The workers paid for this criminal passivity with rivers of blood as the jackbooted legions strode to power over the corpse of the organized labor movement.

Today an international capitalist depression is once again generating a host of ultra-right and overtly fascist formations. It would be a serious mistake to pretend, as do some New

Left/anarchist elements (along with Gerry Healy), that fascism is "just around the corner." But the reactionary terror gangs are an important weapon in the capitalist arsenal and it is essential for the labor movement to know how to crush them. This is particularly true for the young generation of workers who have never seen the union smashed, labor leaders jailed and killed, the socialist press banned and the entire proletariat brought to its knees by a bourgeoisie desperate to maintain at all costs its brutal class dictatorship.

The reformists' democratic illusion in the ability and willingness of the bourgeoisie to "control" reactionary ultras are by no means dead and buried, nor restricted to overtly Stalinist and social-democratic organizations. In Boston today it is the ostensibly Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party which leads the liberal/reformist chorus pleading for federal troops to protect black schoolchildren and communities from racist night riders and lynch mobs.

The centrist European majority of the USec also expresses confidence in the class enemy. The French LCR supports the SWP call for federal troops to Boston (*Rouge*, 5 January). Moreover, after fighting the police all night in the June 1973 Paris anti-fascist demonstration, the Ligue Communiste sent an appeal to "working-class elements" in the Autonomous Federation of Police Unions, asking: "Do you consider it natural [!:] for you to be used to protect fascists and to intervene against strikers struggling to improve their wages and working conditions?" (*Rouge*, 27 June 1973). What Marxist would expect anything else of the hired guns of the capitalist class?!

As for those "workers in police uniforms," Trotsky wrote in "What Next?" (1932) that "The worker who becomes a policeman in the service of the capitalist state is a bourgeois cop, not a worker." Revolutionaries do not appeal to the cops but to the workers movement to smash the reactionary gangs, and demand the expulsion of police from the unions.

The Ligue also called on the French government to ban the Ordre Nouveau meeting, just as the IMG in Britain called on the Labour government to ban the National Front rally. Not only does this foster the dangerous illusion that the bourgeois state can or will stop the fascists (in fact, cops and military officers are often closely connected with fascist groups), but the laws under which it would ban a fascist meeting will be used tomorrow to cancel demonstrations by the

"extremist left." The French government's "impartial" banning of both Ordre Nouveau and the Ligue Communiste following the June 1973 clash is a classic example.

United Workers Action, Not New Left Confrontationism

The Marxist policy on how to fight the fascists was stated unambiguously by Leon Trotsky during the 1930's, and directly contradicts the policy of both wings of the United Secretariat. "Only armed workers' detachments, who feel the support of tens of millions of toilers behind them, can successfully prevail against the fascist bands," states the *Transitional Program*. And in "War and the Fourth International," Trotsky writes: "To turn to the state, that is, to capital, with the demand to disarm the fascists means to sow the worst democratic illusions, to lull the vigilance of the proletariat, to demoralize its will."

Trotsky was quite explicit that the task of defense of the workers movement from the reactionary terror gangs was not the job of small groups, but requires united action by the workers and their mass organizations. Our movement has not been passive in the face of fascists, and in 1939 the then-revolutionary SWP called a demonstration to protest a fascist rally at Madison Square Garden in New York. When 50,000 anti-fascist demonstrators arrived, they did not hesitate to break through police lines. Many of the fascists received a good thrashing from the protestors as they left the meeting.

But the perspective of the USec majority is a different one, of "minority violence" by the vanguard as a stimulant to "excite" the workers to follow its example. D. Bensaid, a leader of the LCR, writes that "...acts of minority violence, presently lumped together under the general heading of terrorism, can play their role as a tactical recourse among others within a strategy of conquest of power by the masses" ("Terrorism and Class Struggle"). They may excite Bensaid, but the history of the last century, from the Russian Narodniks to the Tupamaros, has demonstrated the utter impotence of such a policy.

The incidents reported above show clearly that "minority vanguard violence" against police who are protecting fascist and ultra-rightist meetings either has had or easily could have had the most disastrous consequences. It serves to drive the state and the fascists together, precisely the oppo-

site of what revolutionaries seek to achieve. When they are defeated (as usually happens) by the superior force of the state military apparatus such confrontations greatly embolden the reactionaries.

Marxists call for no confidence in the bourgeois state and warn the working people that they must rely on their own forces to protect against the vicious attacks of capitalist reaction. It is possible even for small groups to play a decisive role in sparking organized workers self-defense actions. But this will not take place through New Left confrontationism but by providing political leadership within the mass organizations of the exploited and oppressed and by building the revolutionary vanguard party capable of leading the workers forward to the conquest of power. Not voluntaristic militarism but a struggle to resolve the crisis of proletarian leadership —this is the only road to victory over fascism!■

—reprinted from Workers Vanguard, 6 June 1975

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