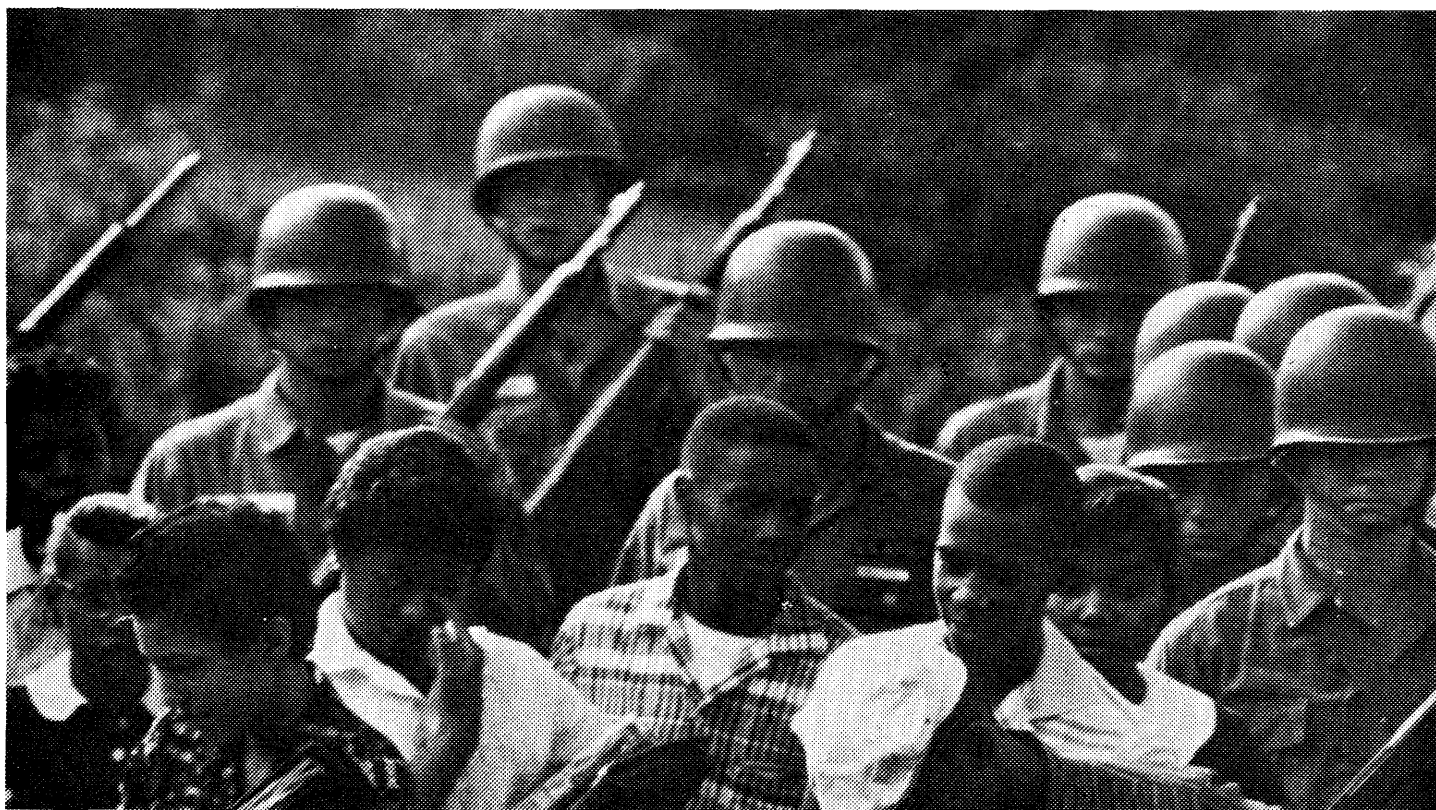


EDUCATION FOR SOCIALISTS

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From Mississippi to Boston: The demand for troops to enforce civil rights



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Introductory Note

This Education for Socialists bulletin consists of articles reprinted from *The Militant*, a revolutionary socialist weekly newspaper, *Intercontinental Press*, a Marxist newsweekly, and excerpts from a 1956 discussion in the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) concerning the demand that the federal government use troops if necessary to protect the legal rights of Black people. This demand was an extension of previous slogans issued by the SWP calling for a Fair Employment Practices Commission (FEPC) with punitive powers, for strictly enforced antilynching legislation, and for other measures aimed at bringing governmental power to bear in support of civil rights. The demand for troops has been applied in instances where Blacks came under attack for attempting to exercise their rights and the local or state authorities were openly initiating, instigating, or in collusion with the attacks against them.

The demand for federal troops was first raised by the SWP in 1955, when the lynchers of Emmett Till were acquitted after a farcical trial by a racist prosecutor, judge, and jury in Mississippi. The slogan came to the fore once again in 1957 during the struggle over school integration in Little Rock, Arkansas. It was raised by

SWP Presidential candidate Clifton DeBerry in 1964, after the murder of three civil rights workers in Mississippi, and repeated less than a year later when Alabama officials attempted to crush a movement for voting rights.

Most recently, SWP candidates in Massachusetts demanded that federal troops be dispatched to put an end to attacks on Blacks during a white racist campaign against the integration of previously all-white schools in Boston in 1974.

The slogan has been combined with support to the right of Black people to defend themselves by any means necessary.

A somewhat analogous situation sometimes occurs when radical groups come under physical attack by rightists or even by other groups on the left, and independent defense efforts are combined with demands that the police arrest the attackers. Examples of such situations were the defense of Trotsky against Stalin's assassins, and the defense of the SWP and other groups against assaults by the National Caucus of Labor Committees in 1973. These situations are discussed in the Education for Socialists bulletin, *Against Violence Within the Workers Movement*.

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COVER: Black students, guarded by U. S. troops, enter Little Rock school in 1957.

Section I. Boston—Little Rock of 1974

[In the fall of 1974, racist opposition to court-ordered desegregation of previously all-white schools in Boston, Massachusetts erupted into violence when white mobs attacked school buses carrying Black children into predominantly white schools. As the racist violence escalated, there was even an attempt to lynch a Black man. The segregationist forces, parading as opponents of "forced busing" and advocates of "quality education," were led by the Boston City Council and the Boston School Committee (Boston's board of education). Racist organizations held their planning meetings in the chambers of the Boston City Council. An additional aura of official sanction was added when President Gerald Ford refused to intervene to enforce the court's desegregation order, and voiced opposition to busing.

[Under these circumstances, the Socialist Workers Party candidates in Massachusetts supported a call by Black leaders for federal troops to enforce the desegregation order and protect the Black students. The SWP went on

a national campaign to mobilize support for the right of Black students to attend previously all-white schools. They actively participated in demonstrations protesting the racist mob violence, demanding that Ford take action against the racists.

[Other radical organizations responded differently. Few gave unconditional support to busing in order to enable Black students to attend the previously segregated schools. Many used the pages of their publications to criticize the demands of the Black community for troops, rather than explaining the importance of the Blacks' struggle for full educational equality. The Maoist Revolutionary Union went so far as to adopt the same anti-busing slogans as the racists.

[Following are the statement of the Massachusetts SWP candidates and contributions by Dave Frankel, Peter Camejo and Joseph Hansen explaining the Marxist position on the demand for troops in the Boston crisis.]

1. All Necessary Force to Defeat the Racists!

From the October 18, 1974 issue of The Militant

The following statement was released in Boston Oct. 9 by Donald Gurewitz, Socialist Workers Party candidate for governor of Massachusetts; Ollie Bivins, SWP candidate for lieutenant governor; and Jeanne Lafferty, SWP candidate for attorney general.

We completely support the demands made by leaders of the Black community that federal troops be sent to Boston immediately to protect Black students from the escalating racist violence.

We condemn Judge Garrity's refusal to send even the woefully inadequate contingent of 125 federal marshals requested by Mayor White. In light of White's public statement that he can no longer guarantee the safety of Black children, Judge Garrity's refusal to act amounts to an open invitation to the racist lynch mobs to engage in further attacks on Black youth and the Black community as a whole.

We also wholeheartedly support the march and rally called by the legislative Black Caucus for this Sunday (Oct. 13) at 1:30 p.m. at Carter's Playground. We will participate in the demonstration and we pledge to use our access to the public as candidates to help make the demonstration as big and broad as possible.

The near-lynching of Jean-Louis Andre Yvon by a howling mob on Mon-

day illustrates the murderous escalation of the racist mobilization. Anti-Black hysteria has reached a fever pitch. Bands of hoodlums are assaulting Blacks.

In this atmosphere, federal troops must be sent immediately to uphold the desegregation order and to protect the Black students who are implementing it. All necessary force must be used to smash the racist offensive and guarantee the safety and constitutional rights of Black people in this city.

In light of the complete failure of the city and state officials to provide protection to Boston's Black community, and in light of the continued refusal of public officials to take decisive action to protect Black students, we completely support any steps taken by the Black community to organize its own self-defense. The residents of Columbia Point recently found it necessary to organize their own observation patrols to protect the community from racist white vigilantes and to watch every move the cops make.

Far from ending racist violence, the cops have been rampaging through the Black community carrying out vicious attacks on Blacks. We fully support the right of Blacks to take measures to defend themselves against all racist attacks.

The racists claimed that the protests are simply "for neighborhood

schools." This is a lie. The events in Boston have torn the facade from the "antibusing" movement and exposed it for what it is everywhere: a racist, violent campaign to maintain white privileges in the schools and reverse any motion toward guaranteeing the constitutional rights of Black citizens.

The elected Democratic and Republican politicians share responsibility for the racist campaign in Boston. Their failure to act to halt it, their continued efforts to downplay the extent and significance of the racist offensive, and their adoption of the anti-busing rhetoric of the racists have all served to embolden the mobs.

Especially scandalous is the role of Senator Kennedy, which epitomizes the treachery of the liberals. Kennedy, who is quick to voice support for civil rights marchers in Alabama or in Mississippi, has refused to throw his considerable authority unequivocally on the side of the right of Boston Black students to attend school.

While he has "deplored violence," he refused to make a firm and unambiguous appeal to all residents of Boston to mobilize against the racist offensive and defend the rights of Black children to go to school.

The Democratic and Republican politicians have urged the Black community to "keep cool" and not do anything that could "provoke trouble."

This has made it easier for the racists to mobilize with complete impunity.

What is needed to begin to change the atmosphere in this city is for the Black community and all supporters of civil rights to take the offensive.

The gains of the civil rights movement were the result of mass actions, exerting moral and political pressure on the government to act to stop racist attacks. The major civil rights battles of the 1950s and 1960s—in Southern

cities such as Little Rock and Selma—became the focus of national and international attention and concern.

Boston is the Little Rock and Selma of 1974.

We appeal to backers of civil rights and opponents of racism throughout the entire country to take action in solidarity with the Black students here, and in support of the demand issued by Black leaders for federal troops.

We appeal to students across the

country to support the struggle—as they did the civil rights movement of the 1960s.

And we appeal especially to the labor movement to throw its strength on the side of the rights of the Black people of Boston.

The stakes in Boston are high, and getting higher. The outcome of the struggle here will have an impact far beyond the city of Boston. The time for action is now.

2. A Reader's Question

From the November 1, 1974 issue of *The Militant*

I really appreciated *The Militant's* coverage of the Boston school fight, but I don't understand why you demand that federal troops be sent there to protect the Black students. If troops were sent to Boston, wouldn't they be used against the

Black community as easily as against the racists? It was the National Guard that shot down students at Kent State.

You point out that the racist antibusing campaign has been actively supported by Congress, by

Nixon and Ford, and lately by the Supreme Court. I agree. But if this is the case, wouldn't it be better to teach the oppressed to rely on their own power rather than on the government?

Patrick Clay

3. Why Socialists Demand U.S. Troops to Enforce Boston School Desegregation

From the November 1, 1974 issue of *The Militant*

By *DAVE FRANKEL*

It is true, as Patrick Clay notes in his letter on this page, that the highest officials of the U. S. government have participated in the racist campaign against busing. Furthermore, they and their government are pledged to uphold the capitalist system, which is responsible for the oppression of Blacks.

As for federal troops, we have seen the work of the U. S. Army everywhere from Vietnam to the ghettos of Detroit and Washington, D. C. Young radicals are much more accustomed to calling for the withdrawal of U. S. troops than for their use.

Clay is absolutely right in his distrust of the U. S. government and its troops. But saying all this does not settle the question of whether to raise the demand that the troops be used against the racists in Boston.

To help clarify the problem, let us ask the same question from a broader point of view: Should we ever call on the government to use its power—that is, the Army and police—for any purpose? If this would be wrong under all circumstances, then that would end the discussion right there. But if not, then we would have to go on to ask whether the particular situation in Boston today warrants calling for the use of that power.

In order to settle the question of

principle, we really have to settle our attitude to laws in general. Laws in the United States are passed by Congress and by local legislative bodies; they are enforced by police power and the court system, which are set in motion by the president, mayors, or governors. Together these institutions represent a machine for maintaining class and national oppression.

Yet there are many laws made by this state apparatus that revolutionists support. They include minimum-wage laws, the guarantees of democratic rights in the Constitution, laws against lynching and poll taxes, laws requiring certain safety measures in industry, and proposed laws such as the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA).

When we support a law we not only support its *passage*, but also its *enforcement*. We are in favor of lynchings being arrested by the police and put in jail. People who discriminate against Blacks or women in employment should be prosecuted. So should killers in Atlanta, Detroit, New York, and other cities.

It would make little sense to hail a legal victory such as the 1954 Supreme Court decision on desegregation, and then refuse to demand that the government enforce the law.

In Boston today the racists are trying to overturn the court decision on busing to bring about desegrega-

tion of the schools. All supporters of the Black liberation struggle are in favor of those buses moving. Thus, we support enforcement of this law.

Reliance on government?

Does this mean that revolutionists rely on the capitalist state to back up the democratic rights and social reforms that have been won through the struggles of the working class and oppressed nationalities? No, of course not. We make all types of demands on the government but rely on it for nothing.

Our method is to rely on the power of the masses, and the central thrust of revolutionary activity must always be to organize in the direction of mass action. Demands on the government are a necessary part of mobilizing the masses, but no matter how important such demands are, they remain an adjunct to the basic strategy of mass mobilization.

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. This does not preclude other types of demands, but these must flow from the actual level of the struggle and the experience and under-

standing of the participants.

Assaults by white racists on the Columbia Point housing project, for instance, prompted the formation of Black observation patrols at one point. 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.

Origin of slogan

The demand for federal troops to desegregate the schools has been raised by leaders of the Black community in Boston, but this demand didn't originate there. It was raised in the 1950s, for example, when the civil rights movement demanded that the government enforce the Fifteenth Amendment.

This amendment gives everyone the right to vote. The Black organizations demanded that the federal government remove the government of Mississippi, that real elections be held in that state, and that federal troops occupy it to protect Blacks.

In 1957 the demand for federal troops was raised again, this time in Little Rock, Ark. U. S. troops, armed with bayonets, stood between the racist mobs and Black school children. The desegregation of the schools in Little Rock was one of the landmarks of the civil rights movement, and a severe blow to the white racists.

In fact, the civil rights movement of the 1950s and early 1960s 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.

The same dynamic would operate in Boston. The government has always been ready to crush the Black community when it rebels against its oppression. But the organization of the Black community in defense of its interests makes such repression more difficult. 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.

Whose advantage does the demand for troops serve? This has been answered in the same way by those on both sides of the struggle. The Black community supports the demand, the racists oppose it, President Ford has refused to carry it out, and the liberals have been temporizing. It would help beat back the racists if implemented. And the process of mobilizing the Black community in mass actions to demand federal intervention would in itself help to change the climate in Boston and push back the racists.

The government's unwillingness to send troops to enforce desegregation—in contrast to its readiness to use them against ghetto rebellions—exposes the real nature of the government. Raising the demand for troops helps in this process of exposure. In addition, the demand for troops helps to drive home the idea that the racists should be crushed; they are criminals, and the way to deal with them is with force.

What if . . . ?

There is another aspect to the argument that if troops were sent into Bos-

ton they might attack the Black community instead of enforcing desegregation. This type of logic can be used any time something is demanded of the government. But the fact that the government may not carry out our demands doesn't mean that we should not raise them.

Opponents of the Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution, for example, say that ERA might be used to eliminate certain of the protective laws that apply only to women workers, or as an excuse to bring the wages of men down to the level of those for women under the guise of "equality."

The answer, of course, is that women are fighting for the ERA to ensure gains for themselves, not to lose them, and not to undermine the position of men. The same movement that is fighting for the passage of the ERA would also fight against any attempt to misuse it as an excuse for reactionary actions by the ruling class.

There is always the risk that the capitalists will try to transform progressive laws into their opposite. But whether or not any law will be used against the oppressed is determined by the relation of forces in the actual struggle. The existence of an organized movement among women in favor of the ERA makes it more difficult for the rulers to attack women, not less difficult.

Those fighting against capitalist oppression are responsible for what they demand, not for how the government tries to circumvent the content of those demands. The Socialist Workers Party demands that the government send federal troops to Boston to enforce the desegregation of the schools there, and for nothing else. That is a demand that has proved useful in advancing the Black struggle in the past, and that is worth fighting for today.

4. Where Sectarians Go Wrong in Opposing the Demand for Troops

From the November 1, 1974 issue of *The Militant*

On Oct. 11, Socialist Workers Party leader Peter Camejo spoke in Boston at an emergency meeting of the Militant Labor Forum, called to protest the racist violence. At the meeting two representatives of a small sectarian group, the Workers League, attacked the SWP for demanding that federal troops be sent to protect the Black students. They argued that federal troops would be used against both Black

and white workers. Instead of calling for federal troops, they said, it was necessary to call for trade-union defense guards.

The following is based on excerpts from Camejo's responses to these sectarians.

You say that bringing federal troops to Boston would necessarily lead to the suppression of both Black and

white workers. That's not true. If it were, then you would have to explain what fundamental change has taken place in the United States in the past 20 years.

When federal troops were sent into Little Rock, Ark., in 1957, they did not go in to suppress both Black and white workers. Soldiers with bayonets protected the Black school children from the racist mobs. This demoral-

ized the racists and broke the back of the racist movement.

The Black movement supported that. The Black people had called on the federal government to intervene.

The same thing happened in Selma, Ala., in 1965. After the local police force there was being used to attack civil rights marchers, the Black movement demanded that federal troops be sent in for protection.

Federal troops were sent. They lined the entire roadway, and the demonstration was able to take place. Fifty thousand Blacks demonstrated, right in the capital of the cradle of the Confederacy. This was a terrific blow to racism in the South. And it only came about through terrific pressure.

I was there. I marched. I saw the troops. I was glad they were there. We would camp at night—there were about 2,000 of us in the early part of the demonstration—and the guards would stand all the way around us all night. This enabled the march to continue, and that was a victory.

I'm not saying that the federal government suddenly changed its class character. But under mass pressure, it was forced to bring the troops in. This helped the movement.

At the same time, we denounced the government for its half-measures—when it withdrew the troops, when it failed to arrest Wallace for breaking the law, when it refused to do everything that was needed to smash the racists.

What would be the result if tomorrow 10,000 federal troops were to enter Boston to protect the Black students on the buses? It wouldn't be a long-term solution to the oppression of Black people, of course. But in this specific fight it would be a tremendous help.

The class struggle is being fought over a specific question: Are those buses going to move? That's the key question right now. Whether those buses with Black students can go into South Boston or not will affect

the relationship of forces. It will determine whether Black people make gains or are set back in the fight for their liberation.

If those buses go through, and the racists are prevented from interfering, and those Black students are able to go to those schools, that would be a blow to racism. The demand to bring in federal troops puts the responsibility right where it lies: in Washington. They're placed on the spot, and forced to either produce or not produce.

What do the sectarians propose? They raise the slogan, "No troops to Boston!" This is the same slogan that the racists raise. The racists don't want any troops in Boston either. They don't want the cops around. They want to be able to go out and terrorize Blacks without anybody to stop them.

Instead of federal troops, the sectarians propose that there be trade-union defense guards. But why stop there? Why not call for sending in the Red Army? Wouldn't that be even better?

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.

Now, if you had said to me that there are a dozen trade-union and Black organizations that have mobilized 10,000 guards, and they are prepared to protect those buses, and someone was counterposing federal troops to that, then your position might make some sense. 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.

You sectarians live in a make-believe world of sloganeering. In your world, trade-union defense guards are counterposed to federal troops. But in the real world, they're not counterposed, because the trade-union defense guards do not exist. The Black com-

munity lives in the real world, and it demands real, meaningful solutions, not unrealistic slogans.

Sectarians argue from schematic formulas. They say: 1) the bourgeois state represses the workers; 2) the army and police are part of the bourgeois state; 3) therefore, everything they ever do is against the interests of the workers.

In South Boston, when a lynch mob was going after a Black man from Haiti, his life was saved when a cop came running over to fire his gun. What would you sectarians have proposed in that situation? You would have said, "Hold it, wait, hold it! We can't let the cop interfere. Cops are part of the bourgeois state and we know that they will hit everybody equally." But in that instance the cop didn't hit everybody equally. He didn't hit the Black man.

Any sensible revolutionist in that situation would have called the cop. That's not selling out or sowing illusions. That's just using your head.

The world of the sectarians doesn't include the possibility that a policeman can stop the murder of a Black man. But in our world, the real world, we say it was good that the policeman stopped the lynchers and didn't allow this Black man to get killed. This doesn't mean that the police have changed their fundamental nature. They are still a racist and repressive institution.

What does the sectarian position boil down to? They tell the Black community, "Stop calling for troops to protect your children from racist mobs. Instead, wait for trade-union defense guards." *Wait!*—that's what their position comes down to. The sectarians are telling the Black community that they should put off their demands for years. They are saying that "It's O.K. if the buses are stopped, if the racists win, just so long as the purity of our slogans is upheld."

That's a completely bankrupt position.

5. Should Federal Troops Be Used in Boston?

By Joseph Hansen

From the November 25, 1974 issue of *Intercontinental Press*

The problem of mobilizing an effective mass defense against the lynch-minded mobs that have resorted to violence in the streets of Boston to put a stop to busing of Black schoolchildren has touched off a debate in the American radical movement. Although other questions are involved, the debate has centered on the question, "Is it principled for revolutionary socialists to support a demand that the laws concerning desegregation be enforced against racist mobs even if this requires the use of federal troops?"¹

Representatives of the Socialist Workers party active on the scene have said, "Yes." Representatives of other currents have said, "No." Some have equivocated or evaded answering.

The question is more complex than might appear on the surface. In the absence of a Trotskyist approach, it is not easy to reach a correct position or even one that is self-consistent, as we shall see.

Contradictory Experience

First of all, let us consider the *experience* of the American working class. This goes back to at least 1877 when President Rutherford B. Hayes used federal troops as one of the means to break a widespread railroad strike.

President Grover Cleveland's use of federal troops in 1894 against a nationwide railroad strike and boycott of the Pullman Palace Car Company had profound consequences in the American labor movement. The extreme violence used in breaking the strike, the bloodshed and witch-hunting, made an indelible impression on the working class. The American Railway Union, which had risen with meteoric speed under the leadership of Eugene V. Debs, was completely crushed, and Debs had to serve a six-month sentence in McHenry County Jail.

One of the outcomes of this experience was quite positive. Debs was converted to socialism and great impetus was given to the rise of a mass socialist movement in the United States.

During World War II, the workers gained further experience along the same lines when Franklin Delano Roosevelt sought in 1943 to crush a strike of the coal miners by ordering government sei-

zure of the mines. In a bitter, protracted struggle in which the fate of the union—and the whole American labor movement—was at stake, the "President and Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy" threatened to call out the troops.

The response of the miners became a saying among American workers: "You can't dig coal with bayonets."

Again, during the great upsurge of 1946, Truman toyed with the strategy of using troops to stem the strike wave. He met with the same kind of response from the workers as Roosevelt had received.

The experience gained by the American workers with respect to the use, or threat of use, of federal troops to break strikes is a precious asset in the class struggle. Revolutionary socialists are duty bound to keep this historic memory fresh and alive. It involves nothing less than a correct, if only rough, insight into the nature of the capitalist state and whose interests it fundamentally represents.

Unfortunately for those who find it difficult to get beyond ABC in learning the political alphabet, this does not end the matter. Experience happens to be contradictory in this case as in so many others.

Following the Civil War, federal troops were used for a number of years in the South to safeguard the civil rights of the Blacks. The troops were kept there, in fact, until President Hayes withdrew them as part of the "Compromise of 1877," the reactionary secret deal in which the Northern capitalists handed back rule of the Southern states to the Bourbons. Hayes could be said to have followed the slogan, "Withdraw the troops from the South; use them against the strikers in the North."

The favorable experience of the use of federal troops to uphold civil rights in the South in the aftermath of the Civil War constitutes part of the historic memory of the oppressed in the United States. Some important events in the past two decades have freshened that memory.

One was Eisenhower's decision in September 1957 to send federal troops into Little Rock, Arkansas, where they defended Black schoolchildren against the lynch-minded mobs and state troopers ("National Guard") that had been mobilized by the reactionary Governor Orval Faubus. The use of federal troops in Little Rock gave great impetus to the Black liberation struggle.

Another was Johnson's deployment of federal troops in Selma, Alabama, in March 1965 to protect civil-rights demonstrators against the attack of state troopers, local police, and mobsters. The

action represented a severe defeat for the segregationists throughout the country.

In both cases the federal government overrode the state government. Faubus in Arkansas and Wallace in Alabama used local troops in conjunction with Ku Klux Klanners and other rightist terrorists to repress the civil-rights movement in blood. Eisenhower sought to persuade Faubus to change course. When he failed, he ordered in federal troops. The same pattern was repeated in relation to Johnson and Wallace. In face of federal troops, guns on the ready, the state troops and local thugs backed down in both Little Rock and Selma.

The differences between the federal and state authorities were of course only tactical. In the interests of the American capitalist class as a whole, the federal government—because of the mounting pressure from the Black liberation movement—was following a policy of removing the worst features of the Jim Crow system. Faubus and Wallace represented the benighted sectors that would concede only if clearly compelled to. Minor as the differences were, they were nonetheless real and the outcome was the Little Rock and Selma victories.

It was such cases that the Blacks in Boston had in mind in asking the White House to send federal troops there. They wanted to compel observance of the laws on civil rights, and they understood very well that this would not be done by the city or state governments, which in reality favored the racists and were encouraging them to put the Blacks in "their place."

As the Reverend Rafe Taylor put it in voicing the feelings of the Black community, "We need at least a division of federal troops with tanks, ack-ack guns, machine guns, grenades, and bazookas and everything else—to put down the rock throwing and intimidation."²

This itemizing of materials needed in Boston indicates a mood that is worth thinking over. It is really a kind of requisition designed to fit the realities of the situation. That it was drawn up by someone who is hardly a professional revolutionist makes it all the more significant.

Obviously at the core of the appeal for federal troops is to be found a correct, if only rough, grasp of the fact that the civil rights of oppressed minorities in the United States cannot be assured without the application of force on a scale demanding an army—or its equivalent. Moreover, it is quite clear that the use of force to the degree necessary to assure

1. For background material see "Boston Crisis: 'Little Rock of 1974'" and "SWP: All Necessary Force to Stop Racists," which are included under "Documents" in this issue. Also see "Racists Terrorize Boston Black Community" in the October 21 issue of *Intercontinental Press*, p. 1352.

2. Quoted in the October 18 issue of *The Militant*.

observance of civil rights would meet with enormous enthusiasm in the Black community.

Anyone in the radical movement who cannot see the implications in the demand by Blacks to use federal troops does not deserve to be called a revolutionist.

We thus come to a tentative conclusion that may appear disconcerting. Something more than mere experience is required for a definitive answer to the question in dispute. Federal troops have been used by the government against the working class to break strikes. They have also been utilized to uphold the civil rights of oppressed minorities composed in the main of working people. While it is not difficult to distinguish between these contrasting cases, obviously we must probe more deeply to find the correct basis for determining a revolutionary-socialist position on the question.

As part of the process, let us consider the stands adopted by some of the groups active in the Boston events.

The Pro-Peking Stalinists

The Revolutionary Union, one of the American Maoist currents, summed up its position with admirable succinctness in a single headline in the October issue of *Revolution*: "People Must Unite To Smash Boston Busing Plan."

That also happened to be the slogan of the lynch-minded mobsters. The coincidence did not appear to disturb these purveyors of Mao Tsetung Thought. They affirmed in a leaflet, "We can't write off all white resistance to the busing plan as just racist."

Blacks likewise, according to *Revolution*, are opposed to busing their children to schools in other neighborhoods: "RU members in Boston have found that quite a few Black parents they have talked to are opposed to the busing and think it's a real hoax."

As *Revolution* sees it, "Without improvements in schools, without more community control of funds, resources and staff hiring and firing, without more bi-lingual programs, etc., the Boston busing plan simply comes down to more Black and white kids being in the same lousy schools together rather than in different lousy schools."

What, then, is the source of the pressure for busing schoolchildren in Boston?

Here is the answer offered by *Revolution*: "The busing plan pits various neighborhoods and nationalities against one another and creates no real improvement at all in the schools. . . ."

"And the busing/anti-busing controversy is a perfect example of an issue which heightens the contradictions of people of different nationalities, with the goal on the part of the ruling class of getting people

to fight each other for educational crumbs."

In a caption to an accompanying photograph of a struggle involving busing of schoolchildren on the West Coast several years ago, *Revolution* declares: "The ruling class has often used busing to sow disunity and discord between people of different nationalities, who need to unite to fight for better education and against national oppression and discrimination."

The Revolutionary Union thus stands on a simple slogan, "Black and white unite and fight." Every revolutionary socialist—and many others besides—can agree on that. Nonetheless, it is evident that there are booby traps to be avoided in carrying out the slogan. The "unity" promulgated by the Revolutionary Union demands that Blacks give way to the most poisonous prejudices of backward white workers.

Consequently, we are able to understand why the Revolutionary Union looks with horror at the demand of the Black community for federal troops: "The RU strongly opposed the idea that the imperialist U. S. government can be a force to fight fascism, as well as with the general characterization of those opposing busing in South Boston as 'fascist gangs.'"³

The position of the Revolutionary Union was so scandalous as to elicit some disapproving comments from the *Guardian*, which represents another current in the United States that lives by the dictum, "Let a hundred flowers bloom, let a hundred schools contend." Carl Davidson, writing in the October 30 issue of the New York weekly, was of the opinion that there are grounds for "suspicions as to whether or not RU has finally sunk both feet deeply into the swamp of white chauvinism. . . ."

On the more controversial issues in the struggle itself, the *Guardian* seeks to remain noncommittal.

"The Black community in Boston has differing views on busing," Davidson affirmed. "Some support it, from either an integrationist stand or as a means to gain access to better school facilities. Others oppose it and stress the importance of community control and improvement of Black schools."

The *Guardian's* stand on the demand for federal troops followed the same pattern. In a special dispatch from Boston published in the October 16 issue, we read: "The Black community has demanded that the city stop the attacks against

3. For more on the position of the Revolutionary Union see "Maoists on wrong side of barricades in Boston" by Jon Hillson in the October 25 issue of *The Militant*, and "Maoists join segregationists in Boston" by Dave Frankel in the November 8 issue of *The Militant*.

them and their children. Two points of view have emerged as to how it should be done. One, led by the NAACP, is to call for federal troops and the national guard to break up the racist resistance. The other, taken up by local community and left groups, is self-defense. Many support both measures."

The editors of the *Guardian* ought to be awarded an autographed copy of the Little Red Book. As was to be expected from serving the people in Maoist style, wisdom has rubbed off on them and they are now able to say of situations like the one in Boston, "Some like it hot; some like it cold; and some like it in the pot nine days old."

'Workers World'

The stand of another Maoist-tainted group should be noted in passing. The October 18 issue of *Workers World* takes the Revolutionary Union to task:

"The Revolutionary Union (RU), a purportedly 'Maoist' organization, has arrived at a thoroughly erroneous line on the situation in Boston. Its newspaper, which bears the title 'Revolution,' states in the October 1974 issue in front-page headlines, 'People must unite to smash Boston busing plan.'

"Is RU so hopelessly blind that it can't see that the racist mobilizations in Boston are being organized *precisely around this same slogan?*"

"The RU's current delusions on this score don't merely stem from theoretical deficiency but from crass opportunism. They are capitulating to white racism." (Emphasis in original.)

The *Workers World's* criticism of the Revolutionary Union is more vigorously stated than that of the *Guardian*. In other respects, however, the *Workers World* lags behind the *Guardian* in reporting the Boston events. If you had to depend on the *Workers World* for information on the issues at stake, you would never know that the Black community had demanded that federal troops be used in Boston.

This is all the stranger in view of the fact that the *Workers World* appears to suffer from no inhibitions or hang-ups with regard to placing demands on the federal government. The main headline in the November 1 issue, for instance, reads: "Gov't can stop layoffs—Demand Ford act now!" A headline on another article in the same issue reads: "Demand Ford enforce law for full employment!"

It can be argued that these headlines aim at betraying the working class by inspiring illusions in the possibility of solving the problem of unemployment without overturning capitalism and establishing socialism. I would not level that argument since it is obviously not the intent of the editors of *Workers World* to

betray the working class. However, it appears in order to ask them, "If it is correct to demand that Ford enforce the law on providing full employment, why isn't it correct to demand that he enforce the law on civil rights? What is your reason for remaining silent on this question?"

The Pro-Moscow Stalinists

The Communist Party, U. S. A., sought to downplay the events in Boston without ignoring them. There were delicate matters to keep in mind—the detente, "peaceful coexistence" with American imperialism, the plans for a summit meeting between Ford and Brezhnev. On top of this, the confrontation in Boston came on the eve of the elections in which the CP line was to pander to the Democrats. Such things required a low profile and no rocking of the boat.

In Boston, it should be added, the CP supported liberal Democrats who bent to the white racists and did not want to press for enforcement of the busing plan.

This explains why the *Daily World* avoided handling the events in Boston in a dramatic way, why it did not campaign for energetic measures against the racist mobs, and why it offered no more than token support to the demands of the Black community for federal troops.

In an editorial in the October 9 issue, the *Daily World* called on people "all over the country" to demand "that the integration plan be carried out and that Mayor Kevin H. White and the federal government act to protect Black students and whites in participating in this democratic move."

The plan of action for the people all over the country was laid out with extraordinary brevity:

"They can start by sending telegrams to Mayor White, City Hall, Boston, and to Attorney General William Saxbe, at the Justice Department in Washington."

Evidently the editors of the *Daily World* are still living in the thirties when the cost of telegrams was within reason and the CP routinely called for showering them on government officials. A telegram today runs in the \$5 to \$10 range and there is no assurance whatever that it will be delivered.

When President Ford announced at a news conference October 9 that he intended to do absolutely nothing about the situation in Boston and that he had "consistently opposed forced busing to achieve racial balance," the CP was put on the spot. Gus Hall and Henry Winston (the national chairman) issued a statement denouncing Ford. Here are the final paragraphs:

"The Federal government must act—send in Federal marshals and troops to

end the racist terror. The Federal government must cut off all federal funds to Boston and to any other community that permits racism to govern its policies.

"Democracy must prevail in Boston!"

As can be seen, the touchy word "troops" was uttered by the leadership of the CP.

This does not seem, however, to have put much steam into the campaign for telegrams, judging from the quantity and quality of them reported in the *Daily World*. The October 15 issue told about a protest march staged by more than 1,000 Blacks in Boston. The account was featured on page 1, the final part being continued on page 11. In the final paragraphs, the account mentions that a "telegram addressed to President Ford for federal protection against racist violence in Boston was circulated among the demonstrators and was signed by many of them."

The text of this lone telegram, which was issued by Laura Ross, a CP candidate for Congress, was quoted as follows:

"There is no place in Boston for fascists and racists.

"President Gerald Ford, we demand of the Federal Government equal protection under the law for the safety of Black citizens and their white supporters who are being assaulted in the streets of Boston.

"The United States government that spends close to \$100 billion a year for military means against peoples outside our shores should be able to find the means to protect out people here at home."

Neither troops nor marshals are mentioned. It is left up to Ford's imagination to find the "means" to provide "equal protection."

The youth group of the CP, the Young Workers Liberation League, has felt compelled to speak more militantly. The Massachusetts-Rhode Island Section Committee drew up a report that was cited in the October 19 issue of the *Daily World*: "Federal troops are needed in Boston now, the report said. A massing of troops and their highly visible presence is necessary on the streets of the city to enforce Federal statutes against discrimination in the schools, and to impress the fact of that enforcement on racist elements in Boston."

The stance of the YWLL is obviously related to recruitment needs among radicalizing youth and to the stiff competition it feels from other groups, particularly the Young Socialist Alliance.

The State Capitalists

The International Socialists, whose main tenet is that a "new form of class society" has appeared in the Soviet Union which they call "state capitalism" or "bureaucratic collectivism," took but passing interest in the events in Boston. In the September 17-30 issue of their twice-

monthly newspaper *Workers' Power*, they denounced the attacks on Blacks. "Police protection," they noted, "was brutally poor."

"It is unlikely," they added, "that tear gas, nightsticks, cattle prods or other forms of force so often used against blacks will be used to break up these cowardly mobs." (Emphasis in original.)

They attacked the busing of schoolchildren:

"Black people aren't enthusiastic about the busing program themselves. Many fear placing their children in such a hostile environment.

"The program has, by and large, been pushed down the communities' throat by the city's liberal political structure, which supports busing to achieve 'equal' education.

"The result of these several conflicting forces is a vicious attack on black people, particularly children who cannot defend themselves." (Emphasis in original.)

In view of the lack of police protection, which *Workers' Power* appeared to stand for in this article, it might be thought that the International Socialists would support a call for federal troops.

It is true that the article included a sentence, "Black people must defend the buses themselves." But this did not stand in logical contradiction to a demand for federal troops, particularly in view of the emphatic closing statement:

"This racial assault must be met head on by an organized force and soundly defeated."

An editorial "Stop Lynch Mobs!" in the October 17-30 issue eliminated any ambiguities as to the position of the state capitalists. The key paragraphs are worth quoting in full:

"Black and white working people need to join together to force the wealthy few who control the political establishment to produce quality education and a decent living standard for all. But black people cannot wait for whites to join the fight today. Their children are being driven in terror from the schools.

"The leaders of the black community have demanded that the state provide protection by sending in more police or federal troops. While this demand is understandable, it is also a dangerous one. In part it reflects the weakness of the black community in this situation. The history of the civil rights movement in this country showed that police force in this society is used to preserve the system, to keep black people in 'their place,' not to protect them from racist abuse.

"Federal troops, or police, must not be allowed into the black community. Troops must not be allowed to prevent the black community from organizing to defend itself.

"Black people are being attacked and beaten by gangs of whites on the streets.

There has been little organization in the black community, and organized self-defense is a desperate need. The black community will win real gains only by relying on its own strength."

Let us agree right off that there is a "desperate need" for "organized self-defense" in the Black community in Boston. In organizing this self-defense on the scale required, what is wrong with demanding the use of federal troops? Why is *Workers' Power* silent about the cases of Little Rock and Selma which were counted as victories that helped inspire the Black movement nationally? Are the editors of *Workers' Power* incapable of recognizing working-class victories when they see them?

And let us look again at that strange sentence at the beginning of the quotation: "Black and white working people need to join together to force the wealthy few who control the political establishment to produce quality education and a decent living standard for all."

Does *Workers' Power* propose to force the wealthy few to use their government to grant socialism "for all," including the wealthy few? Or is *Workers' Power* merely proposing to demand of the government controlled by the wealthy few that it produce quality education and a decent standard of living for the working class and oppressed minorities? But if it is completely principled to demand that a capitalist government provide quality education and a decent standard of living for the working class and oppressed minorities, why isn't it equally principled to demand that it enforce civil rights even if it requires the use of federal troops against racist mobsters?

Finally let us note the parallel between the inconsistency of the bureaucratic collectivist *Workers' Power* and the inconsistency of the Maoist-tainted *Workers World*. Both of them call on a capitalist government to end unemployment but are unable to call on it to use federal troops to uphold the civil rights of Blacks.

'The Torch'

Some of those holding the "state capitalist" position might not agree with the stand taken by the International Socialists. Let us consider the arguments of a purer variant, the Revolutionary Socialist League. An editorial, "BOSTON: DEFEND THE BLACK STUDENTS," which appeared in the November issue of their monthly newspaper *The Torch*, provides sufficient material.

As the editors see it, busing is a "total hoax." All it proposes to do is "spread white and black students a little more evenly through rotting schools. The slight and mainly illusory gains it offers to some blacks come at the expense of whites—who are bused *into* the schools the blacks are bused out of."

The busing plan is a reflection of bourgeois morality: "To the moralists of liberalism and their 'socialist' hangers-on it is 'only fair' that whites suffer worsening conditions to make room for a token reform for blacks." For revolutionary socialists to support such a conception would be a "terrible crime, an acceptance of the limits of capitalism, a capitulation to its divisive strategy."

And who capitulates to this divisive, liberal-bourgeois strategy? The editors of *The Torch* have the list at hand:

"Unfortunately, it is precisely this betrayal of socialism which has been committed by the 'socialist' groups that support the busing program—the Socialist Workers Party, the Workers League, the Spartacist League, the International Socialists, etc."

As for the editors of *The Torch*, they stand forthrightly for the right of Blacks "today to attend school in South Boston and anywhere else." They stand just as forthrightly for "the right of whites to attend the schools of their choice—and not to be forced into worse schools as the price of token black advance. . . ." (Emphasis in original.)

Just as forthrightly, the editors of *The Torch* refuse to give any support whatsoever to the busing program. And, of course, they forthrightly oppose the "claims" of whites to privileges and to "racist exclusion of blacks."

The question of federal troops? It is taken up in the following context:

"We support the rights of blacks to attend school anywhere. We support this through the program of improved, expanded education for all, at the expense of the capitalists. To make these demands meaningful, they must be coupled with the program of full employment through the sliding scale of wages and hours, and the rebuilding of the cities at capitalist expense, central demands of the Transitional Program. We defend blacks and support their rights in today's specific situation while calling for *this* program to win these rights by revolutionary means.

"Finally, we call for *workers' defense guards* to defend black rights and the black community against racist violence. We call on black workers to form armed defense organizations and to demand in the trade unions the official formation of workers' defense guards. We counterpose this to the Socialist Workers Party's despicable call for federal troops.

"Even today the bourgeois police openly sympathize with the whites while they intervene at the last moment to save the black victim from the white mob. Tomorrow they will again turn their clubs and guns *openly* against the black masses—and against the entire working class, white and black.

"Socialists must call for the working

class and the oppressed slaves of American capitalism to defend themselves through their own class power, not the bourgeois police and army. Socialists must call upon them to defend themselves through their own class program, not the bourgeois program. Anything else is a betrayal of socialism, the working class and all oppressed people." (Emphasis in original.)

Of the proposals voiced here, the only one that appears to have any immediate relevance to the current situation in Boston is the appeal to Black workers to form "armed defense organizations." But why is this *counterposed* to demanding that the White House enforce civil rights, using federal troops to put down the racist mobs? Isn't it possible that the demand for federal action can *facilitate* the formation of self-defense organizations?

Such a possibility, of course, is excluded by the Revolutionary Socialist League. As they see it, the capitalist state is a stinking corpse and they do not intend to sully themselves by engaging in twisting its arm. Besides it's dangerous—the arm might twist back.

The purity of the Revolutionary Socialist League is such that although they demand "improved, expanded education for all, at the expense of the capitalists," and, along with this, "full employment," and the "rebuilding of the cities at capitalist expense," they will not, it seems, place these demands on a capitalist government. They will demand them "at the expense of the capitalists" only from a socialist government after capitalism has been overturned.

The Spartacist League

The Spartacist League, headed by National Chairman James Robertson, a talented archivist, has sought to present a critical account of the developments in Boston in the pages of its twice-monthly newspaper *Workers Vanguard*.

Against the Maoists and the state capitalists, *Workers Vanguard* has defended busing while recognizing that it has nothing in common with a socialist solution to the problems of racism and education. The September 27 issue, for instance, states:

"Several ostensibly socialist organizations have caved in to racist sentiment among white workers by opposing the busing of blacks into largely white districts. In contrast to these spineless cowards, the Spartacist League has called unequivocally for the smashing of the racist anti-busing campaign. We fully support racial integration of the schools and every other area of social life. We support busing. It is, of course, wholly inadequate in terms of real integration and providing quality education for oppressed racial minorities. Nevertheless, busing to

achieve racial balance is an elementary, though somewhat artificial, democratic demand."

On the question of defense against the racists, the Spartacist League takes a commendable stand:

"Instead of relying on local or federal government for protection, black people and all working people must depend on their own organizations for defense," declares the October 11 issue of *Workers Vanguard*. "The Spartacist League advocates the formation of a bi-racial defense force, organized by black and community groups and the labor unions, to protect the buses and maintain order in the schools."

However, after this brilliant advance, the Spartacist League slides into its customary sectarian slot. It is absolutely opposed to demanding that federal troops be called into action against the white racists. The November 8 issue of *Workers Vanguard* contains a lengthy article denouncing the position taken by the Socialist Workers party on this question. The gist of the article is contained in the following paragraph:

"The SWP believes that the U. S. government is unwilling to send troops to Boston to enforce desegregation, so demanding that they come will presumably 'expose' the real nature of the government. It is quite true that they will not enforce racial integration, as we have pointed out. But the bourgeoisie may very well send in troops—to prevent any organized defense by blacks! By calling for troops, the SWP does not expose the class character of the government and its hired guns, but helps conceal the fact that these are the enemies of the exploited and oppressed." (Emphasis in original.)

If this is true, doesn't it follow that busing is intended to prevent a better solution, and that in supporting it, the Spartacist League fails to expose the class character of busing, and helps conceal the fact that it is only a bourgeois sop?

If the Spartacist League answers, "Nonsense!" then what is wrong with demanding that this bourgeois sop be assured through the bourgeois sop of federal enforcement?

The inconsistency of the position of the Spartacist League is demonstrated by other items in the same issue of *Workers Vanguard*. In calling for a battle against unemployment, the editors demand "nationalization of the auto industry without compensation." The demand appears to be directed to Gerald Ford and not Henry Ford's grandson.

Robertson may claim that the inclusion of this demand was nothing more than an awkward editorial slipup and that from here on out he will see to it that *Workers Vanguard* hews closer to sectarian norms. All right, but what about the bold headline on page 11 (which we heartily ap-

plaud): "End U. S. Economic Blockade of Cuba!"

We would like to know a bit more about the timing. Is the demand directed at the Ford administration governing today in Washington, D. C.? Or does it simply state what the Spartacist League proposes to demand of America's coming socialist government?

If the intent is to help expose the Ford administration or to help wring a concession from it on the level of foreign policy, why is it not correct to proceed in the same way in domestic policy—concretely in the field of civil rights in Boston today?

The Workers League

Let us turn now to the chief rival of the Spartacist League in the field of ultraleft sectarianism in the United States, the Workers League, headed by National Secretary Fred Mazelis.

The Workers League takes an apocalyptic view of the developments in Boston. As described in the twice-weekly *Bulletin*, the capitalist system is crashing economically on a world scale. From which it follows that the capitalist class in the United States can no longer grant any concessions whatsoever to the working class. In fact, the capitalists are preparing to establish a military dictatorship.

Thus in Boston, "The government is consciously creating conditions for racial incidents in a desperate attempt to divide the working class. . . ." The government's purpose is to "pave the way for federal troops or the National Guard to occupy the entire city." (*Bulletin*, October 11.)

"The government and the army are using Boston as a testing ground for the use of troops and for military dictatorship against the entire working class." (*Bulletin*, October 18.)

From which it follows that anyone who calls for federal troops is practically acting as an agent for the Ford administration, and that is how the *Bulletin* views the Socialist Workers party.

"The SWP not only starts with but also seeks to maintain the racial divisions in the working class, and in that way to paralyze it in the face of the capitalists' plans for massive unemployment and inflation. . . ."

"With their call for federal troops, the SWP turns away from the tremendous movement and strength in the working class, and relies on the strength of the ruling class. They are unable and unprepared to fight in the trade unions and among the youth for a policy to defend the working class." (*Bulletin*, October 15.)

The *Bulletin* offers several novel arguments in behalf of this contention. One is the case of Northern Ireland:

"The recent history of the use of troops in Northern Ireland makes absolutely clear what the SWP is advocating—to pin the working class under the weight of troops who are prepared to carry out the repression necessary for capitalism's survival."

This distortion, which is quite characteristic of the school of Healyism, is deliberate. The editors of the *Bulletin* know very well that the Socialist Workers party stands firmly opposed to the deployment of British troops in Northern Ireland and has backed the movement calling for their immediate withdrawal.

On this question, a much better analogy would have been the stand taken by the Socialist Workers party in relation to the use of U. S. troops in Vietnam. In other words, why does the SWP back the demand to send federal troops to Boston against the racist mobs when in the case of the freedom fighters in Vietnam the SWP from the very beginning advanced the slogan, "Withdraw U. S. Troops Now," and succeeded in making it the main slogan of the antiwar movement in the United States?

The editors of the *Bulletin* probably preferred not to use this analogy in view of their consistent record throughout that struggle of shouting, "Betrayal!"

But Ireland or Vietnam, what can one conclude from their point? Merely that in general an imperialist government uses its troops for imperialist purposes and that it must be opposed in this.

What about the rare cases when it deploys troops against racists as a concession to a powerful civil-rights movement?

The casuists of the *Bulletin* have anticipated the question: The appeal for federal troops in Little Rock was "totally wrong" then; and to make a similar appeal now is absolutely dangerous. They expand on this theme in the October 25 *Bulletin*:

"When the Little Rock struggle took place, the US economy was still in a period of relative prosperity and in the early 1960s, the postwar boom was just beginning to break up. . . ."

"Whatever concessions the government made then were only possible because the economic crisis had not yet broken out.

"In 1965, our movement said that the only way the black working class could fight the organized police terror was to arm itself, not to appeal to the government.

"But as wrong as it was in this period to call for troops, it is a million times more dangerous today, at a time of the collapse of the capitalist system internationally."

The fallacies in this answer are rather glaring. If a capitalist government is "able" to make concessions should they be accepted or rejected? If a capitalist govern-

ment is "unable" to make concessions should they be demanded nonetheless? If a demand is "dangerous"—a nightmare commonly experienced by sectarians—is that any reason not to advance it?

Most glaring of all is the political blindness of the Workers League. It has never occurred to these self-proclaimed "Trotskyists" that America's rulers are capable of making concessions in the use of military force. Wall Street can make concessions not only in withdrawing troops, as in the case of Vietnam, but in protecting Black schoolchildren or in cooling racist mobsters, as in the cases of Little Rock and Selma.

The sectarians of the Workers League are unable to admit this possibility because of their incapacity to use the dialectical method. In their pigeonhole way of thinking, federal troops come under the category of "armed violence against the working class"; and they exclude any other possibility.

If facts prove reality to be richer than their concepts, too bad for the facts and the reality. For a number of years, holding it to be evidence of empiricism or pragmatism, they have ridiculed Lenin's observation: "But facts are stubborn things, as the English proverb says, and they have to be reckoned with, whether we like it or not."

The Why of Little Rock and Selma

Should it be so difficult to see that concessions were made by the federal government in the cases of Little Rock and Selma, and that these concessions were made because of the realities of the class struggle in the United States? What motivated Eisenhower, and later Johnson, was fear of the consequences of the extraparliamentary mass struggle powered by millions of dissatisfied Blacks and their allies in the labor movement and among radicalizing youth.

The White House sought to head off this struggle by granting modest concessions as part of a calculated effort to draw Black leaders into the Democratic and Republican parties and pull the civil-rights movement into electoral channels. The White House strategists also aimed at fostering illusions in the federal government so as to help disarm and demobilize the mass movement, diverting it from taking an independent course that would inevitably move in the direction of revolutionary socialism.

To be noted above all is the fact that the concessions were in reality won by the Black community as a by-product of a mass struggle. Also that the White House strategy succeeded to a considerable degree. The current weakness of the Black community in Boston in face of racist violence was one of the consequences. This was a big factor in Ford's decision not to send in federal troops there.

The Latest Bubble

The apocalyptic vision of troops taking over Boston as a test run for setting up a military dictatorship in the United States burst like a bubble when Ford said "No" to federal enforcement of the laws on civil rights. The editors of the *Bulletin* took it in stride. They simply picked up the pipe and blew a counter-bubble:

"If Ford does not yet send troops to Boston, it is because he knows that such action would meet powerful resistance from the working class." (*Bulletin*, October 29.)

The pundits of the Workers League could not foresee and forecast this? A bit more explanation is in order. Precisely what sector of the working class would offer "powerful resistance"? The racist-minded whites? That is not likely. In previous instances where troops have been used to defend Black schoolchildren, the racists have bowed to superior force.

Of course, the thesis of the Workers League is (or rather was) that the troops would be used against both Blacks and whites in a plot for a take-over by the Pentagon. Against that, according to the thesis, there would be a "powerful resistance" because this is a "time when the economic crisis is bringing masses of workers into struggle to defend their living standards and jobs." (The busing issue, therefore, was only part of a government conspiracy.)

A more realistic explanation as to why Ford refused to send in troops is that he was following Nixon's "Southern strategy" of bidding for racist votes. Naturally he won the plaudits of the Boston racists by keeping the troops out. The Workers League is too caught up in Healyite fantasies to think of that.

Fire a Petition at Them!

If it were true that Ford and the Joint Chiefs of Staff plotted to use Boston as a staging ground for the deployment of troops in establishing a military dictatorship in the United States, one would expect that those advancing this thesis would propose a very concrete program of action to meet the emergency. However, the prophets of the Workers League confined themselves to small revisions of what the less visionary sects proposed:

"The issue is not simply busing, or the racial divisions in the working class, but the fight to unify all workers in a common struggle for decent schools, replacement of the dilapidated and inadequate housing, the creation of tens of thousands of job opportunities, the fight against layoffs and against rising prices. This means the fight for nationalization of industries, for a shorter work week, for billions to be spent on education, health care, and

housing. This means the fight in the trade unions for the construction of a labor party to unite all sections of the working class." (*Bulletin*, October 15.)

Is there a city in the United States to which this does not apply—today, yesterday, tomorrow? And is there anything in this excellent general program that precludes placing relevant demands on the capitalist government as part of the process of mobilizing the workers to establish a government of their own?

In the next paragraph, the final one in this exposition of the stand of the Workers League, the *Bulletin* tries to get down to cases:

"While the revisionists are calling for the army to intervene in Boston, the Workers League is fighting for a program of action by the trade unions to defend all youth [the majority of whom are white in the U.S.—J.H.]. A petition drive has been initiated calling on the trade unions to defend the right of all youth to a decent education, to protect black youth from racist attacks [they get honorable mention!—J.H.], to demand that cops get out of the schools and to fight to mobilize all workers politically against the rotten conditions in Boston through the building of a labor party."

The circulation of a petition in Boston that avoids mentioning busing! Nothing less! That action fits the principles of the Workers League to perfection.

The Socialist Workers Party

The course of the Socialist Workers party in Boston is well documented in *The Militant*, which has provided by far the best coverage in the radical movement on the Black community's struggle against the racist gangs and their political backers. Two typical examples of the material to be found in *The Militant* have been included elsewhere in this issue of *Intercontinental Press*. We also recommend the excellent discussion by Peter Camejo "Busing: What Are the Issues? The Racist Offensive in Boston" in the December issue of the *International Socialist Review*.

Because of the mass of readily available material, I will confine myself here to some observations intended to bring out the contrast between the politics of the Socialist Workers party and that of the various groups considered above.

Unlike the Maoists of various stripes, the SWP had no difficulty in distinguishing between racist-minded white workers and victimized Blacks and in taking the side of the Blacks. The SWP was guided by the teachings of Lenin and Trotsky, particularly on the national question.

Long experience in the class struggle in the United States was also helpful. Prejudiced white workers are participants in the class struggle despite their preju-

dices. It is fatal, however, to concede in the least to poisonous attitudes that undermine unity, weaken labor's forces, and pave the way for disastrous defeats at the hands of the corporations and their political agents. The prejudices of white workers can eventually be overcome but only by exercising the greatest firmness.

In Boston this has to be demonstrated concretely by meeting prejudiced white workers head on in the conflict over busing. Whatever the inadequacies of busing, the issue has been selected by the class enemy as the battleground and that is where everyone has to stand up and be counted.

The main features in the swiftly developing crisis in Boston were the lack of preparedness of the Black community and the interrelated lack of adequate leadership. The key problem, then, was to overcome these lacks. What course was required to accomplish this?

The sectarians had a ready answer. They preached general truths. Perfectly valid as these truths are for an entire period and for the country as a whole, the sectarians were unable to connect them to the concrete situation in Boston.

The SWP set to work to help those currents in the Black community that sought to mobilize mass forces. In the beginning only small and insufficient actions could be undertaken, but no other road offered any promise of leading to effective defense measures against the racists.

In the Black community itself, sentiment was strong for the use of federal troops. The fact that this sentiment was voiced by leaders enmeshed in the politics of the two-party system might appear to offer grounds for discounting it. The sentiment, in fact, did stem in part from illusions in the federal government. But it also reflected knowledge among the Black masses of how quickly white racists can calm down when faced with bayonets.

To have disregarded this sentiment would have meant refusal to take advantage of a big opening. Of course, if grasping the opportunity meant violating revolutionary-socialist principles, then there would have been no choice but to condemn the demand for federal troops, as the sectarians did.

For revolutionary socialists the essential question came to the following: Is it wrong per se to place demands on a capitalist government as part of the process of mobilizing the masses for revolutionary aims? If it is not wrong in general, are there exceptions to the rule? That is, are there *certain* demands that must as a matter of principle never be made? If so, what are they? Is it, for example, principled to demand jobs for the unemployed but unprincipled to demand the enforcement of civil rights?

If the question is thought through to the end, it is clear that the same principle is involved in all of the cited cases. The principle is that demands must be placed on the capitalist government in such a way as to avoid creating illusions in that government and the capitalist system it represents. This is decisive.

Determination of the demand and how to pose it hinges on the concrete situation, on what additional demands are made, what escalation is given to the demands, and what explanations accompany them. The method outlined by Leon Trotsky in the Transitional Program makes it possible to proceed with full confidence in such questions not only in conformity with principles on the level of theory but in conformity with principles on the level of practice.

With such considerations in mind, the SWP found no difficulty in correctly applying revolutionary-socialist principles in the Boston situation. The SWP's central aim was to get mass action going. Through this a strong base could be formed for self-defense. Support for the demand of the Black community that federal troops be sent in to enforce civil rights came within this context. The objective, let it be repeated, was to facilitate organization of effective self-defense.

Thus the course of the SWP contrasted sharply with that of the sectarians who proclaim themselves to be "Trotskyists." At best these sectarians simply paraphrased slogans contained in the Transitional Program, itemizing them in their propaganda like a shopping list drawn up for a trip to the supermarket. They brought their ready-made schemas to Boston and sought to impose them on the situation.

That is why such striking similarities are to be found in their proposals, right down to the inconsistencies, errors, remoteness from the realities, and conviction that nothing could really be done until after the victory of the socialist revolution.

The SWP utilized the Transitional Program in the way Trotsky taught that it should be used—as a guide to action in concrete situations that necessarily differ in important ways from one another. That is why the SWP was so responsive to initiatives taken by the Black community itself, including the demand for federal troops. The initiatives of the Black community were viewed by the SWP as points of departure in fighting for more adequate measures.

The pro-Moscow Stalinists supported both the busing plan and the demand that it be enforced by federal troops. However, the position of the Communist party was not the same as that of the SWP. The differences were quite visible in the way the two organizations handled the

issues and in the objectives they sought to accomplish.

The SWP aimed at the development of mass demonstrations and the organization of self-defense on a broad scale. The CP aimed at assisting the Democratic party and at holding the struggle within electoral and parliamentary channels.

Thus through its way of supporting the busing plan and the demand for federal troops—a way determined by the aim—the CP sought to foster illusions in the capitalist government and above all in the Democratic party. In supporting the same demands, the SWP did so in such a way as to expose the capitalist government and both the Republicans and Democrats.

Inasmuch as the crisis in Boston came in the last phase of the 1974 election campaign, it was not difficult to bring out the difference in principle between the two approaches. The SWP candidates in the area played a key role in explaining the broader issues and in fitting the struggle in Boston into the context of the class struggle on a national and international level.

The Boston events are of world importance. A telling sign of this is the concern displayed by the British bourgeoisie, who feared that a success for the Blacks in Boston could lead to a heating up of the class struggle in Britain. The London *Times*, an authoritative outlet of considered capitalist opinion, declaring that "Busing is not for Boston," sided firmly with the rock-throwers and lynchers in an October 11 editorial.

"Few white parents can feel anything but anger and resentment," said the *Times*, "if their child . . . has to be bused half way across town to another, alien school, where the standards are in all probability much lower; or . . . if their local school is invaded by a crowd of children whose capacity for learning (through no fault of their own) is much less . . ."

In opposition to such class-conscious declarations of solidarity with the Boston racists, proletarian revolutionists everywhere ought to show their solidarity with Boston's beleaguered Black community—and in appropriately demonstrative ways.

At the moment, the struggle in Boston has subsided. The lull, however, will in all likelihood prove to be but temporary. The racists, aware of what Boston can symbolize for the country as a whole, are organizing and preparing new assaults which they hope will definitively lock Black children in their ghetto schools.

The Black community has no choice but to take countermeasures. Any other course would only invite a pogrom of great ferocity. In preparing the defense, the SWP can be counted on to play an effective role. □

Section II. Previous Applications of the Demand for Troops

[The following articles and editorials, reprinted from *The Militant*, are examples of earlier uses of the call for the government to use troops to defend the legal rights of Black people against racist attacks. Here, the slogan was counterposed to the gradualist approach adopted by capitalist politicians who opposed enforcing the 1954 Supreme Court decision on school desegregation.

[The gradualist approach emboldened the Southern racists, who went on the offensive to prevent Blacks from asserting their rights. White Citizens Councils were formed and anti-Black terror organizations in the South became more active. In 1955, Emmett Till, a Black youth from Chicago who was visiting relatives in Mississippi, was tortured and murdered for allegedly "insulting" a white woman. When his killers were acquitted, a storm of outrage swept the Black community and the world. Although surprised by the extent of the opposition to its pro-racist policies, the Eisenhower administration refused to take any action to prevent the repetition of such murders. Similar inaction led to the defeat of Black efforts to integrate the University of Alabama and public schools in Mansfield, Texas in 1956, despite the fact that the Black students in both cases had won court orders favoring integration.

[The Southern racists were now confident that the 1954 Supreme Court decision could be transformed into a dead letter if they took a firm stand. In September 1957, Governor Faubus of Arkansas used troops to bar Black children from Little Rock schools, in defiance of a court or-

der. Aides of the governor helped organize mobs to attack the students.

[The Eisenhower administration opposed forceful action to defend the Black students, but as protests mushroomed in the U.S. and abroad, the administration reluctantly retreated and sent troops to protect the students and assure their admission to the schools. This key victory for Blacks led to a series of other victories, although usually limited to token integration, in the effort to enforce the Supreme Court decision.

[During the 1960s, voting rights and integration of segregated public facilities became the focus of militant Black struggles. Lynchings, mob violence, and police brutality were the main answer of the Southern racists to this movement. In the summer of 1964, three civil rights workers were murdered in Mississippi during a voter registration drive. In 1965, Alabama governor George Wallace and local officials used brutal violence in an effort to crush a movement for voting rights in Selma, Alabama. Worldwide demonstrations of protest overcame the opposition of President Johnson to intervention. He briefly mobilized troops to protect one massive civil rights protest and agreed to sponsor right-to-vote legislation. Although the troops were quickly withdrawn, and the racists sought to regain the offensive through murders and beatings, this confrontation helped break the back of Southern resistance to the right of Blacks to vote. In the next few years, voter registration by Blacks in all parts of the South increased rapidly.]

1. Immediate Federal Intervention in Mississippi

From the October 17, 1955 issue of *The Militant*

How many more lynchings, beatings, floggings, and kidnappings must we have before the federal government acts to protect the Negro people of Mississippi?

Negro leaders are warning that the whitewash of Emmett Louis Till's lynchers at the farcical Sumner, Mississippi trial was a go-ahead signal to the child-murdering white supremacists to step up their reign of terror.

Dr. T.R.M. Howard, frontline leader of the Negro people in the Mississippi Delta area, told the editors of the *Pittsburgh Courier*, October 8, "Unless the federal government steps in . . . there will be an outbreak of violence in Mississippi . . . which will shock the very imagination of the American people, and of the entire civilized world."

Then why doesn't the federal government step in? And why aren't the self-proclaimed Democratic-liberal friends of the Negro people, the officials of the AFL and the CIO, and the leaders of the mass Negro organizations themselves demanding, loudly and insistently, immediate federal intervention, including the sending of U.S. Army troops into lynch-ridden Mississippi?

Does the federal government lack authority for such intervention? Not at all. It simply does not want to act. When Big Business wanted to intervene in the Korean

civil war on the side of the landlords and Syngman Rhee's dictatorship, hundreds of thousands of American boys were mobilized by Truman for "police action" against the workers and peasants of Korea.

But for the protection of one million Negroes in Mississippi, living under a reign of racist terror, the federal government has not lifted a finger.

The decision of an all-white jury composed of the sympathizers of the lynchers, Roy Milam and J.W. Bryant, was a declaration of war by the racist Southern ruling class. It was their answer to the historic U.S. Supreme Court decision of May 17, 1954, declaring school segregation unconstitutional.

If there were any truth to the declarations of love for democracy and freedom that come out of Washington every day the brazen challenge of the Mississippi lynchers would be taken up by the government. Troops would be sent immediately to Mississippi. The lynchers would be brought to justice and the dictatorship of Jim Crow would be removed so the people of Mississippi could freely elect their own government.

The two capitalist parties, Democratic and Republican,

that share the power in Washington are not going to take such a step of their own volition. They are too preoccupied with the filthy game of courting the Southern Dixiecrats as a "balance of power" to even utter one squeak of protest against what is happening in Mississippi.

Moreover, the rule of Big Business in the U.S. is bound up with the maintenance of the open-shop, cheap-labor system in the South. The open-shop South, in turn, depends on the perpetuation of the Jim Crow system. And the Jim Crow system cannot survive without racist terror.

Thus both Big Business parties have a vested interest in maintaining the rule of the Southern oligarchy.

That is why the political policy of the labor officials has crippled the effectiveness of the American labor move-

ment in the struggle against Jim Crow. The labor officials are tied to the Democratic Party machine. And as long as those ties remain the unions are prevented from forming a powerful fighting alliance with the Negro people in the North and South and smashing the Jim Crow system once and for all.

The labor officials stand at the head of the greatest power in America—the working class. It is a power that can wipe the Jim Crow terrorists right off the map.

That power must be unleashed. The Negroes in Mississippi cannot wait. Labor must fight with all its organized might to force the federal government to intervene in Mississippi and enforce 100% the constitutional rights of the Negro people there.

2. How Would a Workers and Farmers Government Deal With Mississippi?

By George Breitman

From the October 17, 1955 issue of The Militant

(The following is an excerpt from a speech given by SWP leader George Breitman at Detroit's Friday Night Socialist Forum on October 7, 1955.)

What then should be done? What should we be fighting for today? I can tell you in two words: federal intervention. Federal intervention with troops if necessary. That's what should be demanded and done. The federal government should step into Mississippi and put a stop to the reign of terror, punish the lynchers, and protect the rights of the Negro people.

That's what the Negro people of Mississippi—and of Michigan too—are waiting to hear and to see, a demand that the government of the United States quit hiding behind legal technicalities. It must quit dodging its responsibilities and step in with all the power at its command to uphold and protect the civil rights of the Negro people. Mississippi and its courts have already proved to the whole world they have no intention of recognizing and protecting these rights. That's what has to be done in this situation—and nothing less will do the job.

If we had a workers and farmers government in Washington today, that is, a labor government elected by and responsible to the working people organized into a party of their own, do you think it would hesitate for five minutes to intervene in a situation such as the one that exists in Mississippi and other Southern states today?

Not for five minutes. Not for three minutes. Not if it really were a government with a feeling of responsibility to the workers and with a shred of concern for the democratic rights of the people.

Without hesitation it would consider it a duty to declare a state of emergency in Mississippi, as the federal government has the power to do. It would move into Tallahatchie County, take the lynchers of Emmett Till into custody for a real trial, and dismiss or arrest the sheriff and the other coconspirators of Milam and Bryant, issue warnings to the Citizens Councils to discontinue their coercive activities, order the school boards to put an immediate end to segregation and to initiate integration in the schools within one week, order the election officials to start registration of all who want to vote, and set an early date for election of all officials and posts in the county, at which the right of anyone to vote would be defend-

ed and upheld by the full power of the federal government.

That's the very least a workers and farmers government would do in a situation like the one in Mississippi. It would probably do a great deal more to insure that there would be no more tampering or flouting of the Bill of Rights in the state of Mississippi. And then we'd really see how brave these people are who now strut around like heroes because they can beat up and kill defenseless Negroes, both adults and children.

If someone should fling up his hands in horror and ask, What right have you to do such a thing?, the workers and farmers government would answer: We do this by virtue of the powers vested in the federal government by the constitution of the United States. We do it by virtue of our promise to root out every last vestige of racism and Jim Crowism and lynch terrorism in the land.

It would say further: We are taking these emergency measures by virtue of the same powers that were utilized in the past by the capitalist class when they ran the government, as, for example, they did when they proclaimed a state of emergency in the 1890s because the workers of the Pullman Co. dared to go on strike for better conditions. At that time, some of you may recall, the president of the U.S., a Democrat named Cleveland, sent troops into the strike areas and arrested strikers and their leaders, including Eugene V. Debs, the union leader who later became a Socialist. In this way they broke the strike.

The only difference will be that a workers government will not use these powers to break strikes and defend the profits of the capitalists. It will use these powers in behalf of the workers and farmers, in behalf of the poor and downtrodden, in behalf of the oppressed and exploited. And no one is more exploited and oppressed, no one needs the helping hand of the government more in this country than the Negro people of the South.

A workers and farmers government would say:

We have good precedent for doing what we do. It is a precedent set by the capitalist class itself, less than 100 years ago. It is the precedent set by the Republican administration that ruled this country after the Civil War, during the Reconstruction period.

At that time the Southern slave system had been broken. But the Southern planters tried to revive it even after the Civil War by driving the Negroes into a new form of bondage. And when the government saw that, it sent federal troops to the South as a force to protect the Negroes. It did protect them—their lives, their right to get wages, their right to go to school, their right to vote, and their right to run for office.

That was the only time in the history of the South that anything remotely approaching democracy existed—when the federal government had bayonets there to enforce it.

It's true that later the Republicans got more conservative and made a deal with the Democrats. They betrayed the Negroes and withdrew the troops, leaving the

Negro people to the tender mercies of their worst enemies.

But we of the workers and farmers government have the same right to intervene in the South that the capitalists had, except that this time there will be no drawing back. There will be no deals with the Bourbons. There will be no betrayal of the Negro people this time, because we mean business and we don't intend to withdraw until the Jim Crow system is smashed into a million pieces and the rights of the workers and Negroes in the South are so solidly established and recognized that no one will dare threaten them again.

That's what a workers and farmers government would say—and that's what it would do.

3. Why We Say: Send U.S. Troops to Mississippi By George Breitman

From the December 19, 1955 issue of *The Militant*

(The following is another excerpt from George Breitman's speech to the Friday Night Socialist Forum in Detroit on October 7, 1955.)

The capitalist press in New York, Chicago and Detroit as well as the Mississippi Delta, is opposed to federal intervention. The *Detroit News* has explicitly condemned federal intervention. In their editorial on the Till trial verdict, they said:

"Nothing in our reading of the trial verdict suggests that the state's prosecutor was anything less than competent, intelligent, forthright and wholehearted in pleading for conviction. If anything less than justice was done by the verdict, the dereliction was not the state's but lay in the hearts of the jury. And the cure for that is not to be found in fiat or such gestures of vengeance as the suggested occupation of Mississippi by the federal military. It lies in the longer and harder but infinitely surer process of civilizing human beings, one by one."

You'll have to look far and wide to find a crasser example of the philosophy of "gradual reform." Civilize human beings, one by one, they say—and meanwhile? Meanwhile, it may be presumed, the Negro people should sit back and submit patiently to the uncivilized terrorism, content with the claim that this is the "surer process." Even the White Citizens Council could endorse such a program.

But how do you civilize human beings, be it one by one or ten by ten? By preaching them sermons on the Golden Rule? There's no shortage of preachers or bibles in the South. By getting them to read editorials from the *Detroit News*? Many of them can't even read, and won't if they can. By improving the school system? They threaten to lynch anybody that tries to touch their school system. Exactly what is the *News*' magic formula for civilizing human beings, and how does it propose to put it into effect in Mississippi?

How to "Civilize" the Lynchers

Now we socialists also want to civilize human beings—but we don't want to wait another thousand years, or even twenty-five years, before it begins to happen. We want it to start now. And our program is the best way for starting it. "Civilizing" takes place in various ways—

training, education, example, and so on. It also takes place through laws, through compulsion, through coercion. Murder, as you know, is uncivilized. But it's not the custom of society to rely for the prevention of murder simply on changing the hearts of men. Society also provides laws against murder and harsh penalties against murder and armed forces in the person of policemen whose presence is supposed to discourage or reduce the incidence of murder. All this is a well-known part of the civilizing process in Michigan too—and we haven't heard the *News* complaining about it or demanding that the Michigan antimurder laws be repealed or that the Detroit homicide squad be dissolved.

But if this is how the civilizing process works in Wayne County, Michigan, why should it be different in Tallahatchie County, Miss.? Why then does the *News* complain when we propose, through federal intervention with troops, to advance the civilizing of Mississippi and to assist in changing the hearts of some human beings there by showing them that they will no longer be able to get away with murder and that they will surely be punished severely if they don't respect the rights of their fellow human beings?

Federal intervention—we socialists are not the only ones calling for that. The NAACP is also calling for federal intervention; I've already read you what Arthur Johnson of the Detroit NAACP said about "telegrams and letters to the president and the U.S. attorney general urging federal intervention." But in at least two respects the NAACP proposal is deficient and must be altered. One concerns the nature of the federal intervention required; the other concerns the methods employed for securing federal intervention.

The Washington Runaround

We say federal intervention with troops will be necessary, just as they were needed in the days of Reconstruction. The NAACP leaves its demand vague and unspecified. The advantage of what we propose is that it is clear, it is plain, it is unmistakable, and therefore it has the ability to arouse and encourage and inspire a fighting mass movement; and the disadvantage of the NAACP proposal is that it is vague, it is ambiguous, it is sub-

ject to different interpretations, and therefore runs the risk of not making a real impact on the thinking of the millions of people in this country who have been asking what they can do about the Till case.

Not long ago, on September 7, about a week after Emmett Till's body was taken from the Tallahatchie River, a top NAACP delegation met in Washington with Assistant Attorney General Warren Olney III and urged the government "to delay no longer in calling a halt to the jungle fury unloosed in Mississippi." They asked for "affirmative action," but what kind of affirmative action was not clear. And in response they got a runaround.

Bureaucrat Olney told them that the matters relating to denial of the vote in Mississippi and the killings of Lee and Lamar Smith "are under investigation" and the Department of Justice "will determine what action can be taken on the basis of the evidence and the law when the investigation is completed."

As for the Till case, he told them, the department had looked into it and reached the conclusion that it was not a federal case but one within the jurisdiction of the state of Mississippi. He said they're "concerned with the situation" and their agents have had the various complaints under investigation since the killing of Reverend Lee last May, but he couldn't say what action would be taken until all the facts were in and the powers under the civil rights law were fitted to the facts uncovered. As I said—a runaround. The same kind of runaround the NAACP has gotten in all such cases, including the lynch murders of NAACP leader Harry T. Moore and his wife Harriet in Florida almost four years ago—which is also still under investigation.

We used to be told that kidnapping was a federal offense and the FBI usually moves in on kidnapping cases. But the kidnapping of Emmett Till is different somehow, and the FBI agents evidently can't be spared from their witch hunt against radicals to intervene in this kidnap case.

Will the Federal Government Send Troops?

The trouble with the NAACP, obviously, is that it is not asking enough. It is asking the government to intervene on the basis of the so-called federal civil rights laws, which the government practically never invokes or enforces. That plays into the hands of the ones who are giving us a runaround. Instead of confining the demand to these civil rights laws, which are so limited that the most anyone punished by them could get is a year in prison anyhow, the NAACP should sweep aside the legal technicalities and go to the heart of the matter, intervention with U.S. troops. The raising of this demand will produce a tide of enthusiasm and militancy among the American people, inspire them and give them a goal worth fighting for. It could clarify things and bring them to a head. That's why we say the demand for federal intervention should be clarified, expanded, and concretized.

The second fault with the NAACP demand is the method they are using to obtain federal intervention. This is obviously a big demand, and obviously the government will not do it if it can get out of it. Sending a delegation to Washington to meet with an assistant Attorney General is all right for the record, but it achieves nothing.

To ask for federal intervention is not enough; you must also *fight* for it. And the only way to fight for it effectively is by mobilizing the people *in action*—in action that goes beyond the scope of sending letters and telegrams. The government has to be shown that the people want federal intervention, and that they want it badly, and that they are and will be angry with anyone who stands in the way of their getting it—in a word, that they are fighting mad and ready to act on their own if the government refuses their reasonable request.

This means the organization of mass action—mass meetings and demonstrations and marches—both here and in Washington—bringing out on the streets millions of people expressing their indignation and demands. The Negro people of this and other cities have already shown in the last weeks their readiness and eagerness to do something, to fight. Instead of being calmed and told to wait indefinitely, while the Department of Justice makes up its mind what arguments it will use to justify nonintervention, the mass of the people should be encouraged to show their will and their temper in militant acts. That's the only kind of language the government and the ruling class understand anyhow. And it's the duty of the NAACP to speak this kind of language itself.

The other question has to be faced, and it had better be faced squarely. Will the federal government intervene, will it really step in and do something to stop the terror in Mississippi? We can start the answer by saying one thing for sure—it positively won't unless there is a mass demand and a mass struggle for federal intervention.

If left to its own, this capitalist government will never intervene in Mississippi in any effective manner. That was made clear by the September 7 meeting of the NAACP leaders with the Department of Justice, and it's made clear by the long list of hundreds of unpunished lynchings, shootings and beatings that have taken place in the South since the end of World War II, under both Democratic and Republican administrations.

But will the government, whose record shows that it is not at all concerned or displeased by the Jim Crow system, will it intervene if there is a mass struggle and mass pressure for it? Here an absolute answer is difficult. The government will be reluctant whatever happens, it will try to duck and to take only halfway and partial measures if it is forced to take any, but the final answer will depend on the relation of forces, on the outcome of the struggle between those who want Jim Crow terrorism ended and those who want or are willing to see it continued. It will depend above all on the power that can be brought to bear by both sides in this struggle—and that is a political question.

We Must Form a Labor Party

Federal intervention in Mississippi implies two things, if you're serious about it and carry the fight for it through to the end. It implies political action, for one thing, and it implies political action of a different kind than has been practiced by the labor and Negro movements up to now. It implies political action independent of the two major parties which are tied indissolubly to Jim Crow and the capitalist system that breeds Jim Crow and profits from it.

If you're consistent, it means breaking with the two old parties and forming a new party, a Labor Party that will

unite the labor, farmer, and Negro movements, run its own candidates for office all over the country and seek to elect them with the aim of taking political and economic power away from the present capitalist rulers, including the rulers of the South, and putting it in the hands of the working people and their allies among the working farmers and the Negro people.

Anyone who wants to fight for the end of Jim Crow, anybody who takes up the struggle for federal intervention in Mississippi and carries it through to the end will find in the course of the struggle that only such a break with the parties of Big Business and Jim Crow reaction, only the formation of a Labor Party and the fight for the establishment of a workers and farmers government can actually assure consistent and effective federal intervention and successful measures to smash the Jim Crow system.

The Cause and Cure of Jim Crow

I want to conclude now by saying this: It's not enough to be indignant at the killing of Emmett Till. It's necessary also to understand it, its cause and its place in the total picture of American life. If you probe it, you find that the story of Emmett Till has its roots in the past; that it began to unfold long before he was born, when a struggle was taking place in this country over the kind of social system that was to replace chattel slavery in the South; that it is linked to devious schemes and ambitions in Washington, to calculations of profit and

plots for power in Wall street, to aspirations for equality by millions of people in Chicago, Harlem, Detroit, and Atlanta; and that the final word in the story of Emmett Till has still not been spoken.

Emmett Till's death reveals a mortal sickness in American society, a sickness that can be cured only by a fundamental reorganization of our economic structure and our social relations, a reorganization that can be achieved only through a radical political change. The only sure and complete way to avenge Emmett Till is by destroying the conditions and abolishing the institutions that made such an atrocity possible in the first place.

That means you, and the rest of the American people, have to make up your minds and take your stand—you've got to declare war against white supremacy in all its forms, manifestations, and guises; you've got to declare war against all who support, defend, or apologize for Jim Crow—and above all its political supporters, defenders, and apologists, that is, the two capitalist parties whose hands are stained with the blood of thousands of Emmett Tills.

It means *fighting* these enemies and not temporizing or compromising or collaborating with them *in any way*. It means building a new leadership in the labor and Negro movements, and a new party representing their common interests. This is not an easy road, but it is the only one that can lead us to a world of brotherhood, freedom, and equality.

4. Troops to Little Rock—A New Stage in the Fight

From the September 30, 1957 issue of *The Militant*

An important victory—comparable to the Supreme Court's original decision against school segregation—has been won in Little Rock. A reluctant President has been compelled by an outraged public here and abroad to enforce the Negro people's constitutional rights.

How complete a reversal on school desegregation is the use of federal troops may be appreciated by a glance at the record of the political parties on the issue. During the 1956 Presidential campaign, Republican candidate Eisenhower vowed he would never use troops or any kind of coercion under any circumstances to enforce the high court's school ruling. Democratic candidate Stevenson loudly echoed the promise. Only Socialist Workers Party candidate Farrell Dobbs declared for full and speedy federal enforcement of school integration including use of federal troops.

Since then Eisenhower has repeatedly stated he would never use federal troops. Only a few months ago, in response to the question, he angrily cried, "Over my dead body!" In the recent civil rights struggle in Congress, as an act of appeasement to the Dixiecrats, one of the several laws authorizing such use of federal troops was repealed. Every capitalist politician in Congress—from North, South, East and West, from reactionary to liberal—then and there recorded his opposition to using federal troops if necessary to enforce the Negro people's rights in the South. The Senate vote was 90 to 0.

The nine courageous Negro children and the steadfast NAACP branch led by Mrs. L.C. Bates in Little Rock have thus accomplished far more than opening that city's

high school. They have erased from the Supreme Court decision the scrawl, "Not to be seriously enforced," put there by a conspiracy embracing the President, Congress, Democrats, Republicans, reactionaries, moderates, and liberals.

For the use of federal troops in Little Rock constitutes a precedent for the Negro people that the capitalist politicians—much as they will squirm and try to weasel out of—will never be able to get away from. At each crucial stage in the fight for the enforcement of the rights they now possess on paper, the Negro people will be in a position to demand federal intervention if they need it to override the illegal and violent opposition of Deep South state officials and their racist mobs. This demand will receive support from white workers and sections of the middle class nationally. The resulting political pressure for effective federal action against the inhuman and unconstitutional structure of Jim Crow, and the capitalist politicians' resistance to such pressure, can blow the Republican-Democrat political monopoly sky high.

The use of federal troops in Little Rock is also a damaging blow to the whole philosophy of gradualism in school desegregation. This is the policy now in effect. It has resulted in more token than real desegregation, and a lessening of that.

This gradualism has been palmed off on the public as the way to avoid violent racist opposition. As has been amply demonstrated in other places besides Little Rock, it does no such thing. Its timidity persuades the racists

that integration can be beaten. It was precisely this gradualism that was challenged by the Deep South officials using Gov. Faubus as their advance guard.

With the precedent committing the federal government to actual enforcement of school desegregation, fighters

against Jim Crow will increasingly realize that since full-scale battles must be waged, it is better to wage them for real, not token, integration. For justice and the Negro people cannot be satisfied with anything less than full integration and in the Deep South itself.

5. Demand Troops for Mississippi

By Clifton DeBerry, SWP Presidential Candidate in 1964

From the June 29, 1964 issue of *The Militant*

The atrocity against three young and courageous civil rights workers in Mississippi demonstrates the imperative need of federal action in that state. I call upon President Johnson to immediately deputize and arm the Negroes of Mississippi and to dispatch federal troops there to prevent further violence against civil rights workers, to restore law and order, and to enforce the U.S. Constitution.

The white-supremacist forces in Mississippi include not only the Ku Klux Klan and the White Citizens Council but also the state and local officials at every level. I am a Negro from Mississippi, and I know that these racists cannot be persuaded by any moral argument. They are prepared to defend the system of segregation by any means including the most heinous and brutal crimes. The only language they can understand is the language of force and the federal government should provide that force in sufficient magnitude.

The occupation force should arrest and throw into jail every cop or other official in any way connected with the kidnapping of Michael Schwerner, Andrew Goodman, and James Cheney. Just before they were kidnapped, the three young men were arrested by the racist police in Philadelphia, Mississippi. It was reported that the rights fighters looked like they had been beaten by the police.

This kidnapping is the latest atrocity in a long list of crimes against Negroes in Mississippi. No one has ever been punished for the murder of Emmett Till, Mack Charles Parker, Medgar Evers, and many others. There have been five murders by racists in Mississippi in recent months alone.

When the first group of voter-registration workers, with two of the kidnapped youths among them, was training in Oxford, Ohio, they were addressed by John Doar of the U.S. Attorney General's office. "What are you going to do this summer to enable us to see the fall?" was one

of the angry questions directed to Doar. When Doar provided a lame defense of the Johnson administration's refusal to protect them, he was met with boos and hisses.

John Lewis, Chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, and Mrs. Rita Schwerner, wife of Michael Schwerner, have gone to Philadelphia, Mississippi. Will President Johnson protect their rights and their lives?

The federal government is aware of the situation in Mississippi. By not providing adequate protection for these young people who are helping U. S. citizens to register to vote, the administration shares responsibility for what has happened to the three young men.

While the three kidnapped youths were in jail in Philadelphia, Mississippi, their coworkers became fearful for their safety, and telephoned the FBI in Jackson. The FBI agent, a Mr. F.H. Helgeson, refused to help and told the rights fighters that he wouldn't have any more dealings with them.

President Johnson has sent troops into South Vietnam and all over the world. Whenever U.S. interests, as he sees them, are threatened, he is quick to act. But when Negroes and civil rights workers are systematically brutalized by the illegally elected white-supremacist government of Mississippi, and when that government tramples the Bill of Rights daily, he cannot find the means to protect the lives of the people he is supposed to represent or to defend the Constitution he is sworn to defend.

Johnson's record indicates he will not carry out his duty to protect Negroes from the racists. Negroes should not wait for him to act. In Mississippi, they have the right and duty to organize and arm themselves for self-defense. In the rest of the country there should be mass demonstrations putting unbearable heat on Johnson to send troops to Mississippi and to deputize Negroes there.

6. Demand U.S. Troops Be Sent to Alabama! The Concession on Voting is Not Enough!

By Fred Halstead

From the March 22, 1965 issue of *The Militant*

MARCH 17—The unprecedented wave of demonstrations over the Selma events—demonstrations boldly and directly aimed at embarrassing and exposing the hypocrisy of President Johnson—have wrung from him significant concessions on voting rights for Negroes in the Deep South.

The proposed new voting-rights law, as proposed by Johnson in his March 15 speech to Congress and the nation and as described by administration spokesmen, would eliminate the "tests" now used in the South to dis-

qualify Negroes from voting. It would also provide for federal registrars upon petition by Negro citizens. This goes far beyond what Johnson and Congress would have dreamed of conceding before the militant demonstrations over Selma.

But Johnson continues to evade his immediate and central responsibility—enforcement of *existing* federal law by intervening in Alabama with federal armed force against the criminal state and local authorities there.

Indeed, Johnson's concession on voting is in part de-

signed to help him evade that responsibility. He hopes to get the struggle out of the streets and back into the courts and legislative halls where it can easily be bogged down. Meanwhile, the criminal violations of Negroes' rights by Alabama "law enforcement" officials continue.

Federal duty and authority in this situation is clear. Section 333 of Title 10 of the U. S. Code authorizes the President to use federal troops to occupy an area "if any part or class of its people is deprived of a right, privilege, immunity or protection named in the Constitution . . . and the constituted authorities of that state are unable, fail, or refuse to protect that right."

Federal troops should occupy Selma—and all other areas where similar flaunting of Negroes' constitutional rights exists—and arrest and remove from office the guilty local and state officials. The federal government, moreover, should arm and deputize Negro citizens there to defend themselves, police their communities and assure that elections are honestly carried out.

Otherwise atrocities by racist thugs wearing state and local police badges will continue. The bloody attack by county possemen, the day after Johnson's speech, on a march in Montgomery, Ala., led by Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) Executive Secretary James Forman is an example. It made headlines because hundreds of civil rights supporters from outside are now in Alabama and the eyes of the world are focused there. But Negroes in the Black Belt counties of the South are subject to the brutalities of these racist thugs year round without even that protection afforded by national publicity.

That is the impelling practical reason why the Southern movement's more militant and responsible section, led by SNCC, is pressing to take advantage of the current spotlight to deal a telling blow to the authority of the local

racist officials. Open differences on this question have developed between some SNCC leaders and leaders of the more conservative Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) headed by Rev. Martin Luther King.

The SCLC leaders are relying heavily on Johnson's "good faith" and their connections with the Democratic Party. Fearful of jeopardizing these cordial relations, they have allowed themselves to be used by Johnson's agent, Leroy Collins, whose orders are to blunt the struggle and take the heat off Washington.

That the struggle has remained sharp enough to force concessions from Johnson must be credited to the Southern movement's more militant section. Evidence that the more perspicacious of America's ruling class realizes this is the March 14 *New York Times* editorial pointing out the "risk" that unless the "mature, responsible" leadership of the movement is "vindicated" by sufficient concessions, the "young Negro hotheads thirsting for a dramatic showdown" will be encouraged.

The Selma demonstrations throughout the country also revealed, for the whole world to see, widespread domestic opposition to Johnson's brinkmanship in Vietnam. For suddenly there appeared everywhere the demand to withdraw U.S. troops from Vietnam and send them to Alabama, a demand previously raised only by radical forces such as the Socialist Workers Party.

This put the administration under terrific pressure, both at home and abroad. Johnson was hurt badly by the demonstrations. His popularity began to plummet. That's why he made the concessions on voting-rights legislation and recited "We Shall Overcome" to Congress. The whole experience is striking proof that the way to get concessions from the capitalist power structure and its politicians is not by supporting them, but by opposing them, exposing them, and putting the squeeze on them with every available lever.

Section III. SWP Political Committee Discussion on the Troops Demand (Excerpts)

[Although the demand for troops to defend civil rights had precedents in previous demands for the federal government to enforce legislation to protect Blacks, this particular formulation aroused some discussion in the SWP. Sam Marcy, the leader of a sectarian tendency in the party, opposed the demand in principle, and sent a letter to this effect to the Political Committee (see Appendix). Other party leaders recognized that the demand was correct in principle but thought that it was tactically un-

suitable to the situation. The Political Committee of the SWP met to discuss this question on February 9 and 13, 1956. In December 1956, the National Committee voted to approve use of the demand for federal troops whenever appropriate.

[The following are excerpts from the Political Committee discussion. The complete stenogram of that discussion appears in *SWP Discussion Bulletin*, Volume 10, No. 12, October 1957.]

Farrell Dobbs: In his letter of January 21 Comrade Marcy opposes the federal troops slogan and advances substantial argumentation in support of the view he takes. This slogan was approved by the Political Committee at its meeting of November 1 in the form of a motion stating in substance that the main stress in paper should be on slogan for March-on-Washington, setting forth in that connection demands for civil rights legislation, sending of federal troops to Mississippi, and unionization of South.

The general nature of events, the developing objective

situation, together with the arguments put forward by Marcy, clearly indicate the importance of having a rather thorough discussion of this question. Such a discussion will surely be of value to the party in examining some basic aspects of our propaganda work and will be particularly important because we are heading into a presidential campaign where the Negro question will be a major issue. The basic criteria established for determining our propaganda slogans will be a matter of paramount importance for the presidential campaign.

Marcy sets forth in his letter as the key criteria for tran-

sitional slogans their function in implying either an invasion of the rights of capitalist property or the curbing of the powers of the capitalist state. These are among the aims of the transitional program, but they are presented in such a manner in Marcy's letter that they give a one-sidedness to the interpretation of the program and introduce an element of rigidity into the concept of transitional demands.

The program also states that transitional demands must stem from today's conditions and from today's consciousness of the masses. Starting from those components, we seek to make contact with the masses in their thinking on issues of the day and help impel them in the direction of revolutionary class consciousness and acceptance of the socialist program. The objective situation today is one of great ferment among the Negro people over civil rights, but in the mass consciousness there is a great degree of illusion that they can achieve their aims through the medium of the federal government. Our task is to help overcome those illusions and impel the masses in the direction of opposition to the capitalist government.

It is with a view toward serving this ultimate aim that the slogan of the federal troops is proposed. In and of itself the troops slogan is a democratic demand as distinguished from a transitional demand. It does not transcend the limits of the capitalist order. It simply asserts the democratic right of the Negro people to be protected by the government from murder and mayhem.

However, that differentiation between a democratic demand and a transitional demand does not state the full situation with regard to the current political problem. It is in the very nature of the present objective situation, the momentum of the Negro struggle, that conflict stemming from a democratic demand helps to dispel mass illusions as to the nature of the capitalist government. It helps break ground for the introduction of transitional demands that lead the mass deeper into conflict with the capitalist rule. This specific point is touched on in a paragraph in the resolution on "Negro Liberation Through Revolutionary Socialism" adopted by the National Committee in 1950, which I would like to quote to the comrades:

"In analyzing the role of small nations Lenin cast light on the special contribution of the Negro struggle to the proletarian movement in the United States. Under the banner of Negro rights, the movement of the Negro people is rendered most sensitive and responsive to social tensions. It acts as a spur in precipitating struggles for elementary democratic rights; it unmask the class nature of the capitalist state; it helps educate the working class to the reactionary role of bourgeois democracy and the need to wage merciless struggle against it; and propels into action the major political forces of the nation and the organized labor movement."

It is in precisely this sense that we envisage the slogan of sending troops to Mississippi—as breaking ground for mass support of broader transitional demands that begin to transcend the capitalist order, that deepen and intensify the struggle against the capitalist state as such. This side of the problem is ignored in Marcy's interpretation.

He sees in this posing of the task nothing more than a "subjective design" on our part. This "design" he contends is in conflict with the objective political needs. He holds that the slogan of sending troops to Mississippi conceals

the class essence of the state, that it will have the effect of increasing the tendency toward mass reliance on the capitalist government to solve their problems, and consequently will stifle motion toward independent struggle on the part of the masses.

To set the capitalist army in motion, Marcy says, is in and of itself a reactionary step. However, the capitalist army is merely one reactionary organ in a total entity which is the reactionary capitalist government. If his criteria are valid, if it is in opposition to objective political needs to raise the troop slogan because the army is reactionary, such criteria would compel us to reconsider several of our slogans—anti-lynch laws, FEPC [Fair Employment Practices Commission] with teeth, any slogans in this form—because they are addressed to the capitalist government which is reactionary as a whole. Obviously nobody is going to propose that because when you think the thing through to the end, if you establish such criteria, it blocks the party from a whole avenue of propaganda slogans impelling a forward motion of the mass.

Marcy also makes the argument that in counterposing the federal to a state government by calling for federal troops to intervene in Mississippi we are glossing over the identical class character of these two organs of capitalist rule; meaning by that, I assume, that we are creating the impression there is a class difference between the federal government and the government of Mississippi. To pose the question in that way is to turn the problem upside down. The reality is that a differentiation already exists in the minds of the masses with regard to the federal government as against the Mississippi state government. They are pretty generally convinced there is no justice in Mississippi or in Georgia or Alabama. But the masses still have illusions about the federal government and these illusions have been deepened by the Supreme Court decision relating to desegregation. Our task is to push demands that will help dispel these illusions as to the federal government. The troops demand helps do that by emphasizing the failure of the federal government to act to enforce its own laws against terroristic acts and to enforce the democratic rights of the Negro people. This underlines in the last analysis the identity between the two organs of capitalist rule.

We have had a good example in recent days of the effect this demand can have. [Dobbs is referring to the case of Autherine Lucy, a Black woman, who won a court decision ordering her admission to the previously all-white University of Alabama in February, 1956. After several attempts to lynch Lucy by racist mobs, university officials barred her from the school to appease the racists.—editor] After Miss Lucy was driven off the campus at Tuscaloosa with eggs and rocks, Eisenhower said he hopes federal intervention won't be necessary. Stevenson came out in open opposition to sending federal troops to Mississippi. Such episodes reveal that Eisenhower and Stevenson have a common line, a slogan of "gradualism," don't upset the "traditions" of the South. Under these circumstances the troop slogan—implying the stiffest measures to enforce Negro rights—helps to dispel the mass illusions that they can resolve the problem through the federal government.

In another connection Marcy sees in the presentation of the troops slogan a mere echoing of the line of Negro

reformists and union bureaucrats. In the first place I don't see anything wrong in our advancing the same slogan as may be advanced by the Negro reformists for the reasons I have already stated. I think the reality is that there is far from unanimity among the Negro reformists on this question. I found concrete evidence to this effect while in Chicago recently. Among the Negro workers in packing and farm equipment there is a big response to the demand for federal troops and for a March-on-Washington to back up the demand. Abner, a leader of the local NAACP and also a union official, is supporting the federal troops slogan, reflecting the sentiment in the ranks. In a conversation with NAACP members he related a discussion he had with Wilkins, the head of the NAACP, in which Wilkins had brought up a whole series of arguments to try to convince Abner he should not be pushing the federal troops demand.

Marcy took exception to the action of the paper in welcoming the statement of Mazey of the UAW calling for a federal trusteeship in Mississippi. Marcy indicated he thought the paper should have criticized Mazey in not calling for a labor trusteeship administered by the unions. This formulation is a rather algebraic one—"labor trusteeship"—and somewhat obscure as a political slogan. I think Breitman put the whole question in much clearer political focus in his original presentation of the idea of the troops slogan.

Breitman began by demonstrating the problem confronting the Negro people of the South because of Jim Crow terror and proceeded then to show how a workers and farmers government would act in this kind of a situation, using its full power, including the military forces, to suppress the terror and enforce the rights of the Negro people. He proceeded next to show that this is what the present government should do. Therefore the NAACP should not confine itself to merely asking for legislative, administrative and judicial decrees but should insist that the government back up its words with deeds, including enforcement of Negro rights by federal troops. He pointed out that this is a big demand which must be fought for through mass action. To demonstrate their seriousness, the Negro leaders should organize a March-on-Washington. This course, he pointed out, would help give weight and momentum to the whole struggle of the Negro people.

Federal intervention, he concluded, is a political question which implies independent political action. In the last analysis the only way the Negro people are going to win their rights in the South or anywhere else in this country is to join in alliance with the organized labor movement to form a labor party and take power away from the capitalist rulers.

He did an effective job of making a differentiation between our position and that of the Negro reformists and union bureaucrats. The question is not whether we advocate democratic slogans which Negro reformists and union bureaucrats are advocating, but whether we use the slogans to impel the masses leftward by the full content we put into them.

The editorial that appeared in the paper in connection with Breitman's presentation stressed the fact that the capitalist rule is bound up with the open shop, Jim Crow system in the South. It pointed out that for this reason

support of the Democratic Party weakens the fight against Jim Crow, obstructs unionization of the South, and works to the detriment of the Negro and white workers alike.

Concerning the overall treatment of the slogan in the paper, one can say that here and there a loose or inexact formulation has been used, but the general line of the press treatment has been in accord with the PC decision of November 1. I think moreover that events are demonstrating the correctness of the PC decision.

Great importance attaches to the line we develop in this connection because the Negro question will be one of the central issues of the presidential campaign. A correct approach to current issues in the Negro struggle, together with the problem of unionizing the South, should make possible a concrete projection of the whole concept of the labor party. We would commit a serious mistake if, through unwarranted rigidity, we handicapped ourselves in utilizing current issues to propagandize for the labor party.

Marcy stresses heavily in his letter the slogan of defense guards, stating that if it appears premature at the moment a milder form of the slogan will take hold. You will recall we discussed this question in an earlier meeting of the PC and there was more or less general agreement in the committee that we must think out the best possible way to inject this slogan into our propaganda. An editorial in the paper last December took up this aspect of the question and made reference to the accumulated evidence that the Negro people themselves have been showing initiative in moving toward self-defense. The editorial also stressed the union role in the problem of self-defense, a problem which confronts unionists, Negro and white alike, as well as the Negroes as a people.

I think the troop slogan will help to push the defense guard slogan as a propaganda point. Failure of the government to protect the Negro people against terror leads to the conclusion that they must find a way to defend themselves as best they can, in other words, defense guards organized in association with their white allies.

Morris Stein: I would like to outline some preliminary thoughts on the federal troops slogan. I think we will have to return to this question for a fuller discussion when the occasion presents itself. This is only the opening of what should prove a fruitful discussion.

We are discussing here not merely whether it is permissible for us to call for federal troops to enforce the Bill of Rights in the South; we are discussing a slogan already widely used by others and we must know what to say about it. This slogan has become the property of the Negro people. The Negro press has been advocating it and Negro leaders have been using this slogan as a test of politicians in the election campaign. This is how Stevenson was smoked out on the question of Negro equality. The federal troop slogan has already become a campaign issue and I dare say that not only the capitalist politicians but our own candidates will be confronted with it as well. In the course of the campaign somebody is bound to ask, "Where do you stand on this question of sending the federal troops to Mississippi to protect Negro lives?" According to Marcy they would have to say they are against it, that it would create illusions, that if ever

the federal government sends troops it would be to suppress the Negro masses, not to aid them. And then, according to Marcy's reasoning, they would have to add as he does in his letter: "Only a question of method, only a family quarrel on how best to rob and exploit the Negro as well as the white workers separates the ruling financial oligarchy into opposing cliques." Involved here, according to Marcy, is only a family quarrel of rival cliques. Presumably we are not to have any interest in this.

But the question of the method the bourgeoisie uses in its rule is not a neutral question for us and it is especially not a neutral question for the Negro. The Negro cannot remain neutral. The question of whether the northern or Mississippi method of exploitation is applied to the Negro is a question of life and death. Neither is the white worker indifferent to the question of method. For example, there is only a difference in method in the exploitation of a white worker in the state of New York or the state of Mississippi. But the state of Mississippi has "right-to-work" legislation, as do other southern states. We do not have such legislation in New York as yet. The difference is a difference between unions that can exist, function, and defend workers' living standards, and no unions. It is not a class difference to be sure. But it is an extremely important difference we dare not ignore.

The difference between the Taft-Hartley Law and the Wagner Labor Act is also a difference in method applied by the same capitalist class, by the same monopolists. Are we indifferent to the Taft-Hartley Law? We demand of the capitalist government, the executive committee of the bourgeoisie, that they repeal it. Marcy's reasoning on the federal troops demand could apply with equal force to the demand to repeal the Taft-Hartley Law. From his premises one can argue that all demands on the government or its agencies represent a violation of principle. This line of reasoning is not unknown in the history of the movement.

Marxists have never been neutral on the question of method of bourgeois rule. Since the day of Marx, Marxists have been siding with the more progressive methods of exploitation and oppression against the more reactionary and more brutal. We had this argument out in connection with the Spanish Civil War. We had comrades who were against supporting the Loyalists in their struggle against Franco because they were "fundamentally" the same. Fundamentally they were all capitalists. Fundamentally it was the opening of the Second World War and where do pure revolutionists come butting in? We opposed this sharply and we would do it again today because we are interested in defending bourgeois democracy against all the methods of totalitarianism and that is what you have basically in the South insofar as the Negro is concerned. They are under totalitarian rule.

The essence of politics is not in identifying different categories and lumping everything together under general labels. It is essential to understand the class nature of the regime to be sure. Without that one understands nothing. But this is only the beginning of wisdom. Once one understands how to differentiate between the fundamental classes in society, he has the obligation to understand the contradictions within the classes and the conflicting forces

within them. Without such an understanding we will never be able to participate in the day to day struggle. Were we to take the attitude that the differences between North and South are of no consequence, because they are all in the same family, we would be doing the bourgeoisie a great favor. The capitalist class would like nothing better than to be able to settle its "internal" conflicts without the participation of the masses. But it is precisely by injecting themselves into the family fights of the ruling class that the masses transform inner-class struggles into social crises.

There is a difference between North and South, not a class difference to be sure. I think anybody who tries to convince us that fundamentally from a class point of view they are the same is trying to break into an open door. There is a difference in methods of oppression. This is a difference which has been plaguing American capitalist society. This is one of the contradictions of American life over which the sharpest conflicts have occurred. It is a crying contradiction dogging American imperialism all over the world. The most advanced capitalist country has a residue of an unresolved bourgeois-democratic problem—the Jim Crow system. And they haven't been able to resolve it. That indicates the condition of the decay of the system. At the same time it delivers terrible blows to imperialism the world over.

The demand for federal troops to Mississippi may well have international repercussions. American troops are all over the world. The European workers may well pick up a demand like this and say, "Why don't you go to Mississippi to protect the Negroes there? We don't need your protection."

The Negro people feel there is a difference between South and North. They know what goes on in the North. They have families here. They have been here as soldiers. They know there is a difference in treatment. A Negro can walk on the same sidewalk with a white man. He cannot in the South. He doesn't have segregated drinking fountains and waiting rooms as he has in the South. He can send his children to the same school as the whites. In a word, he is not Jim Crowed. His dignity as a man is not offended to the same degree every moment of the day. There is a difference in that sense and this difference has been reemphasized by the Supreme Court decision on school desegregation. If anything, the Negroes would tend to exaggerate the differences and to have illusions about the federal government and its role. But they are not baseless illusions. They derive from the reforms that have been offered: the army has ordered abandonment of segregation; the federal government has been forced to abandon segregation in the federal district; the federal government and the Northern state governments have been yielding concessions in the North and the border states. The deep South is resisting.

Negro equality is in and of itself not a transitional demand. It is a bourgeois-democratic demand which has not been resolved within the framework of capitalism and, from all indications, may never be fully resolved within the framework of capitalism. This is precisely what endows it with such explosiveness and gives it a broader basis than we can get with any slogans of a purely class or socialist character. There are bourgeois liberals who want

to fight for Negro equality. There are many in other national minorities, for example, among the Jews. They keep protesting even though they are themselves bourgeois. There are differences within the ruling class itself on this question. Sections of the bourgeoisie find Jim Crow very embarrassing.

This broad base of support for the Negro struggle in the South is matched by a great solidarity in the Negro community. It is beyond doubt a popular struggle. The government has no solution. Because of this, the Negro struggle can become a bridge toward socialist struggle. The demand for Negro equality, a bourgeois-democratic demand, can under certain conditions pass over into a struggle for socialism. What stands in the way is the illusion that the federal government is on the side of the Negro masses. That illusion has been reinforced by the New Deal period, by the fact that Truman has always introduced civil rights legislation, knowing full well it would not pass in Congress. This runaround has been going on for years. But now the struggle in the South has reached a very acute stage. As a reaction to the Supreme Court decision, the white supremacists are on the war path. They are organized, they are armed, they have the state governments behind them. The white supremacists denounce the federal government and the Supreme Court. By that very token, the Negro people look to the federal government to enforce its own laws and court decisions. It was a happy thought to ask the federal government to send troops to enforce equality in the South. It puts the federal government, the president, directly on the spot so that he cannot dodge the issue. That is progressive.

The slogan of federal troops does not solve the Negro problem. All arguments on that score are beside the point. It can only be very limited in its results. It does one thing—it puts the federal government on the spot and thereby advances the consciousness of the Negro and white people. It says in effect: you have a constitution, you have a Bill of Rights and a Supreme Court which guarantee the Negroes their lives and equal rights. Please enforce it. I find nothing wrong with this. We should promote it.

What happened to Stevenson in California is a good example of the effectiveness of this approach. An audience of about 150 Negro leaders listened to Stevenson. One Negro put to him the question: Would you send federal troops to the South? Stevenson said, No, you cannot bring freedom to the Negroes on the point of bayonets. It would result in civil war. The Civil War failed to resolve the problem. You must take into account traditions, etc. You have to do it by education. The Negro said: He is a phony. One little question like that has served to expose Stevenson as a phony, and that will be the test Negroes will put to every politician in this year's election. This is the test as to whether one is serious about the fight for Negro equality or whether one is paying lip service to it. This slogan, I repeat, is only limited in its results and we cannot confine ourselves to this slogan or even have it as the central slogan. We have, I believe, a rounded program for that. But that is not in question. What is in question is the claim that this slogan is in violation of principle.

This idea that the troops slogan is a violation of prin-

ciple cannot be supported. At least I have never heard of any such principle which makes a sharp line of demarcation between the army and the other agencies of government. What is the difference between the army and the president and his cabinet and the courts? I don't think there is such a principle. Any slogan that sharpens the struggle, that exposes a phony, is in line with my principles. It exposes the capitalists, not in words or by long orations that can at best convince the few, but by putting them to a simple test, which exposes them before the multitude. All one has to say is: "Are you for or against enforcing your own constitution, your own Bill of Rights, your own court decisions?" And that simple question becomes one of the most effective ways of exposure.

In conclusion, I want to read a few passages from Trotsky which may shed some light on the question we are discussing. Here is what he wrote:

"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'etat* 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. Thus in a number of cases the workers are forced not only to permit and tolerate, but actively to support the practical measures of the bourgeois government.

"In ninety cases out of a hundred the workers actually place a minus sign where the bourgeoisie places a plus sign. In ten cases however they are forced to fix the same sign as the bourgeoisie but with their own seal, in which is expressed their mistrust of the bourgeoisie. The policy of the proletariat is not at all automatically derived from the policy of the bourgeoisie, bearing only the opposite sign—this would make every sectarian a master strategist; no, the revolutionary party must each time orient itself *independently* in the internal as well as the external situation, arriving at those decisions which correspond best to the interests of the proletariat. This rule applies just as much to the war period as to the period of peace." ("Learn to Think—A Friendly Suggestion to Certain Ultra-Leftists" by Leon Trotsky, Coyoacan, D.F., May 22, 1938. *Writings, 1937-38*)

The point in Trotsky's argument here which has a bearing on our discussion is that he does not at all take automatically a negative position on questions involving the army. He said we must weigh each case and make an independent appraisal. If this is the case, if actions of the bourgeoisie are not automatically opposed just because it involves the army, it is certainly impossible to argue that a question of principle is involved. The army is not an independent entity to which a Marxist must apply the test of a specially contrived principle. It is an integral part of the state and can only be considered as such.

Joseph Hansen: I welcome the discussion. First of all because I was not here in November when the motion was adopted to advance this slogan and this is my first opportunity to state my position. Secondly, because I think it will facilitate an educational discussion on the subject among the rank and file. I have heard some doubts expressed among comrades about the troops slogan and in the school a discussion on the subject has reached a rather advanced stage. Hearing some of the arguments raised, I reached the conclusion that there is a considerable section of the party that has not gone through the discussion we had on the transitional program at the time it was adopted. It is time we discussed those questions now.

The preliminary reaction among some comrades against the slogan is healthy in my opinion. They have learned about cops and troops and they are dead set against them. When you raise the slogan they say, what is this? Consequently, I think the discussion will help clear the decks for us so that we can intervene effectively in this big discussion that is going on throughout the country.

What has happened in the South is a consequence of the Supreme Court decision in favor of desegregation. The question now raised more and more insistently is, how is the decision going to be carried out? To demand federal troops is part and parcel of the whole process of learning that you cannot depend on the bourgeoisie or their government to carry out desegregation. This is going to be a key issue in the presidential campaign. We cannot escape it. We have to have the answers and they have to be correct.

Here's how I approach the question. First of all I abstract from a number of things. Formulations, for example, in the paper. I can speak from experience and say that not all formulations in the paper are the happiest ones. Sometimes you have to go so far as to put in a correction. I would like to abstract from that because in a discussion among us we should be able to disregard such things, important as they may be, and get down to the heart of the question—whether or not it is permissible in principle to raise certain bourgeois slogans.

I would also like to abstract from the question as to whether the slogan has been advanced by liberals. It should be immaterial in the question. What is of most importance is whether or not it facilitates our politics.

I am also not concerned about whether or not the slogan has actually been advanced by the masses themselves. What is decisive is whether or not it is demanded by objective necessity.

These are important questions, which must be discussed but for the purpose of clarity at this stage, I think we have to abstract from them.

Marcy considers it wrong in principle to raise the slogan of federal troops. In considering it a question of principle, I think he is dead right. But I believe it is correct in principle to raise it, not wrong.

First of all, what is the class character of this slogan? In my opinion it is a bourgeois-democratic slogan. Is it principled for a revolutionary socialist party to raise that type of slogan? That is the main question facing us.

I happened to have got my own training on this question under favorable auspices. One of the problems in

Mexico was to train comrades coming down there to accept the bourgeois cops. We had a lot of them around. We had good fraternal relations with them. New comrades could not understand that. Some of them had gotten bullet wounds from cops in strikes; others had been thrown in prison. How explain our alliance—in principle? The practical reasons were easy to explain. It was a question of life or death—but how could you square it with general theory? Here's how the Old Man explained it: We have asked the bourgeois cops to protect us. From whom? A workers state. Isn't that a contradiction? Doesn't it violate our principles? But as revolutionists we stand on the basis of every revolutionary gain made in the history of humanity. Among the big gains we defend are those of the bourgeoisie. This includes the inviolability of human life. In the case of the workers state, this workers state had degenerated so far it has gone below the bourgeois level *in this respect*. Therefore from a theoretical viewpoint we are correct in asking the bourgeois state to protect us against a workers state.

If we had based ourselves on Marcy's approach, we would have been completely unprincipled in making an alliance with the armed forces of the Mexican state on this question.

That happened to be the time when the transitional program was drawn up. We had some discussions on this that included the relation between transitional slogans and democratic slogans.

First on the difference between the two kinds of slogans. Revolutionary bourgeois slogans can be advanced by us in the present stage only because the bourgeoisie themselves have entered the stage of decay and are no longer able to uphold them. They dissipate their gains and throw them away. They actually revert to a position below what they began with in the struggle against feudalism. It falls on us therefore to defend and to advance these bourgeois slogans.

A transitional slogan on the other hand takes the bourgeoisie from their most advanced position. You have complete democracy, for instance. In other words, we have reached the limits of capitalist society. To advance to socialism you then have to advance slogans that transcend capitalism; that can only be carried out by planning. Despite complete bourgeois democracy, that throws the bourgeoisie into terrific contradictions. This is the difference between transitional and bourgeois democratic slogans.

How are they the same? In their effect. Under present conditions, with the bourgeois world in its present stage of decay, either a transition or a bourgeois democratic slogan has the effect of mobilizing the masses and enabling them to transcend the bourgeois structure both politically and economically. From that viewpoint they are identical. It is important to understand this. If you don't you can really become sectarian.

What is most disturbing about the slogan to some comrades, I think, is its form. What! You demand that federal troops be sent to Mississippi! It is the form that is startling. It seems like you are appealing to the worst organ of the bourgeois state and that to make such an appeal can therefore only sow illusions, especially when you consider the type of people for whom politics begins and ends with such appeals. However, once you look past the form

and consider the content of the slogan you get a different picture.

First of all the content is a demand to enforce elementary bourgeois law and safeguard human life in Mississippi. From this viewpoint the slogan is completely justifiable. Next you notice this—the content of the slogan is the feeling among wide sections of the Negro people that the government in Mississippi cannot be trusted. That is a very progressive development. You can't trust the government in Mississippi to safeguard human life. That is completely revolutionary and I can't see how we can possibly put ourselves in the political position of not trying to foster that sentiment and if possible trying to lead it.

The Negro people, of course, have illusions about the federal government. They don't trust the government in Mississippi and want a new government there, but still think that this can be the federal government. We are confronted with the question, should we go through this experience with them or confine ourselves to good advice from afar? Everything in our revolutionary experience indicates we should go with them.

I want to consider two possibilities as to realization of the slogan. (1) The demand is not granted. Therefore, the pressure rises and the possibility increases for organizing demonstrations. Let's take the comrades in Chicago or Detroit. They know Negroes and others interested in their struggle who are quite aroused about getting Washington to take action. So the question arises: How about getting up a delegation to go to Washington to see why we can't get some action. You immediately have a slogan around which you can mobilize a considerable number of people to go to Washington to put the heat on about getting troops to Mississippi. You could have similar moves elsewhere in the country. Then suppose some delegations go to Washington, including a good sampling of our comrades. This very process would do a lot more about exposing the federal government and dissipating illusions than all the pamphlets and speeches in the world about the dangers of trusting the federal government to end segregation. It seems to me self-evident what could be accomplished along these lines.

(2) Let us take the other possibility, which seems to be less likely, that federal troops are actually sent to Mississippi. Will they do nothing but fraternize with the Bourbons, shoot up the Negro people, and make things even worse? It seems to me a whole new set of pressures come to bear instead, offering a rich field for a set of slogans. One of the first things we would have to consider would be a program for using the troops to bring law and order. For instance, we could propose they arrest the governor and legislature in Mississippi. On what ground? Their conspiracy to evade enforcement of the law, their conspiracy to protect murderers of the Negro people. If the federal troops don't do this, we have completely new grounds for exposing the federal government. If they do arrest the governor and so on that would be a favorable development opening up a lot of possibilities for demanding the deepening and extension of the action. Either way, the opportunities for us are multiplied.

As Stein pointed out, a whole series of slogans we have been fighting for for years are bourgeois-democratic slogans. Take the Kutcher campaign. Kutcher is fighting for his job. He is fighting for the right to be a wage slave. Aren't we creating illusions about wage slavery? More-

over, he is fighting for a job from a bourgeois government. Doesn't this create illusions about jobs in the bourgeois state? The fact is the fight is justified theoretically because a ruling class must at least support its own slaves.

Take Kutcher's other campaign, the right to a home without being evicted. Aren't we creating illusions about the housing question? Or his right to a pension for fighting as a soldier in an imperialist war. Isn't it bourgeois to demand that right?

Take the demands addressed to Eisenhower, letters to Eisenhower, and so on. Isn't it petty-bourgeois politics to write to the head of the capitalist state demanding favorable action? Don't you create the illusion that he might grant what you are asking him for? You could make out quite a case if you listed the banks backing Eisenhower and therefore conclude from this that to address letters to Eisenhower is hopeless, therefore creates illusions, and in any case is bourgeois. It is bourgeois. So what? We connect this slogan with a series of others and advance it in a period when the bourgeoisie can no longer grant them, can no longer uphold the stand of their own revolution.

Are there dangers in this kind of slogan? Yes. You cannot be in politics without some dangers. Such slogans become tests of the cadres and the caliber of the party. If you simply stop with a slogan like this, then you don't transcend the bourgeois limits; your party degenerates and becomes a liberal party. Your capacity to advance a slogan like this, to tie it in with the wishes of the masses, and to pass on to transitional and to socialist slogans becomes a test of the caliber of the party and these tests you cannot escape. We must admit that there are dangers, but we have confidence in our capacity to avoid them.

Murry Weiss: I don't think comrades who are taking a half-way position on the federal troops slogan are thinking the matter through. The fact is that our main slogan has been for a march on Washington. This is what we have pounded away on. We have seized on this on every sign of progress towards such a movement and we have attacked the labor bureaucracy and the Negro leadership on this score. We hailed every step forward that indicated the preparation of a mass demonstration to follow up the nationwide Till demonstrations.

For us this was the first point on the agenda in the labor and Negro organizations. But what are we going to propose to the rally in Washington? No one has objected to supporting the demand for civil rights legislation from Congress. That has been our slogan in the Negro struggle since we had anything to say about it. We have called for FEPC, anti-poll-tax, anti-lynch, abolition of the filibuster. Are we going to stop short and say, pass these laws but don't enforce them?

What will we say about the Supreme Court decision on school desegregation? Hail the decision as historic, but not demand that the government carry out the decision which was won by the mass movement, not only in this country but internationally? We will be sitting tongue-tied before the mobilization in Washington if we can't with confidence and theoretical assurance put the slogan for using federal troops before the rally. We have the advantage of having raised the slogan first. The fact that there was a deep need for this answer has since become manifest. Now it

is a major issue in the national debate on civil rights.

From a theoretical point of view, what is involved? We are calling for the enforcement of elementary bourgeois-democratic rights in the South. The Jim Crow dictatorship maintains its rule by armed force. When we call on the federal government to carry out its laws and remove the military force of the white-supremacist dictatorship with its own force, we do not take the slightest responsibility for the capitalist state. We gave material support to the Loyalist government in Spain, but we refused any political support. Meanwhile, we sought in every way to develop the independent armed forces of the working class.

I can't understand at all the statement that the paper has presented the federal troops slogan in a reformist spirit. The overwhelming emphasis of the treatment has been a pedagogic exposition of the nature of the capitalist state. Our opening article was taken from Breitman's speech on what a workers and farmers government would do in Mississippi. The first editorial dealt with why they refused to send troops. The answer: because it is a capitalist state. A thorough explanation by Breitman in subsequent issues of the paper unraveled the class relationships involved.

We never presented the slogan as a cure-all. The motion passed in the committee, which has been the guiding line for the paper, had three points to it: March on Washington to demand civil rights legislation; send federal troops to Mississippi; organization of the South and defense guards in connection with that. The paper has covered all these points, not once but in a number of articles. Of course we have tried to use the events as they unfolded to give reality and concreteness to our policy. With the Montgomery developments we can bring our propaganda and analyses to a higher level. What is new in Montgomery is not that the Negroes have some weapons in their homes. What is new is the emergence of an organized mass movement that utilizes the tactic of boycott. The movement is remarkably cohesive. It possesses a high morale and discipline. Nobody has dared to attack it frontally. No attempt has been made, thus far, to arrest the organizers. Although the paper has covered the boycott from the beginning we can do a lot more than we have in stressing the significance of this movement. We can relate it to the recent waves of strikes in the South. We can develop the idea of a Negro-white union organization drive and show how the problem of defense against race terrorism would be solved by such a drive. You would have ready-made organs of defense against any kind of terror. The Negro people in alliance with the white workers could reconstruct the South and take it away from the terrorists.

Our slogans are interrelated. The elementary democratic demand that the federal government use troops to protect the constitutional rights of the Negroes in Mississippi, goes hand in hand with transitional slogans, the building of a union movement in the South goes hand in hand with building defense forces, the cleavage between the armed forces of the capitalists (the federal government's and the southern states') goes hand in hand with the concept of armed self-defense against terrorism. Which slogan is most important, which gives the party the greatest voice? It is speculative and idle to debate this. This is what we must study from week to week and see how to

develop our slogans as a part of the consciousness of the unfolding movement.

John G. Wright My main objection to the position put forward by Marcy in his letter and Copeland in his spoken remarks is that their discussion of principles, of slogans in particular, is divorced from the concrete conditions of the Negro struggle as it is unfolding today. They appear to overlook that in the social structure of capitalist United States, the Negro question plays the role of a survival of feudalism. To be sure, we ourselves are sometimes given to saying that American capitalism has had no survivals of feudalism to combat in its rise. The fact is that chattel slavery and its residue, the oppression of Negroes, have played exactly that role, creating for American capitalism a contradiction both at home and internationally.

The Civil War was supposed to have settled this question 100 years ago. It did not. From a juridical standpoint, on the federal statute books there is one set of laws in this connection and in the southern states an entirely different set of laws, more accurately, a code of lawlessness. Juridically, there appears to be no need of additional legislation to guarantee civil rights to Negroes. On paper they have all the rights guaranteed to citizens under the constitution.

The bourgeoisie thus finds itself in a position where one section of the capitalist class violates the laws of its own bourgeois state. The Negroes, on the other hand, are in a position to advance the most elementary democratic demand, namely, that the bourgeoisie cease and desist to violate its own laws and that the capitalist state and all its branches enforce its own laws. Are the Negroes correct in exploiting the contradiction in which the imperialists find themselves? Should Marxists back them up in such demands? More, should Marxists take the initiative in advancing such demands whenever necessary? I think the answer is quite obvious, emphatically yes.

As many comrades have pointed out, the slogan of federal troops is not advanced as a cure-all, but simply as one of the weapons in the struggle, one part of a rounded program as we can present at the given time.

Should Marxists draw any principled distinctions between the different branches of the state, especially in this connection? Is there a principled difference between the executive, the legislative, the legal arms of the capitalist state? Lenin never drew such a distinction. He never placed some special connotation on the armed forces as being somehow different in principle from the other branches of the capitalist state. On the contrary, he stressed that coercion is the essence of the state; that there is naked force not only behind the armed forces but behind each and every branch of the bourgeois state. No, the army cannot be maintained to be something apart in principle from the other branches of the bourgeois state, least of all in connection with the bourgeoisie enforcing its own laws, or a demand that it do so.

A word about illusions. The task of revolutionists is indeed to fight illusions. And there are illusions and illusions. We ought to bear in mind that illusions about the federal government are a specific characteristic of American history, peculiar not only to the Negro people, but also to the American working class as well. Down

through the years even the vanguard of the American workers has constantly drawn a distinction between the federal and state governments; and invariably a distinction to the benefit of the federal government. As Cannon in his history of the IWW points out this vanguard, too, was permeated with this "belated hangover."

It is a deep-seated historical illusion. I can't go here into the historic and political reasons behind it. Suffice it to point out that the U.S. bourgeoisie has successfully ridden the crest of two victorious revolutions. No other bourgeoisie has such a record to exploit. In the early history of this country there have also been two great reformation movements carried out in the name of the federal government—the Bill of Rights struggle under Jefferson, the New Deal under Roosevelt. The bourgeoisie has known how to exploit these to its advantage as well. This should suffice to indicate that if the workers generally, the Negro people in particular, have deep-seated illusions about the federal government, it is not because they are gullible, or because they sucked such illusions out of their thumbs.

These illusions will not be destroyed by arguments, or phrases. Such mass illusions can be destroyed only through experience, only through our passing with the mass through this experience.

In this situation to talk of the danger of illusions about the federal government when the task of Marxists is precisely to shatter this deep-seated illusion seems to me to miss entirely the meaning and purpose of the slogan of federal troops to Mississippi.

When the discussion originally took place, Wood raised the question of defense guards. He did not raise it in counterposition to the slogan of federal troops but as an outcome and need of the struggle itself. If you look at the matter closely—the slogan of sending federal troops does provide a natural opening in this direction. Since the federal government is not enforcing its own laws, since you can't depend on the scoundrels and murderers in the state or the localities, what choice is there left to the Negro people and workers in the South except to defend themselves?

George Weissman: Our demand for federal troops to take over in Mississippi and enforce the constitutional rights of the Negroes is in my opinion not only principled but very timely and one of the few slogans of the recent past launched by us which has awakened a response among the Negro people. I think that far from being through with it occasions will rise again and again as the Negro struggle unfolds in the South where we will have to raise this slogan.

I wasn't present at the last meeting but I gather that it has been stated that a slogan doesn't have to be a transitional slogan for us to raise it. We raise all the democratic slogans also as the situation requires them for the defense or advancement of the workers and minority peoples of this country. As a matter of fact almost every single slogan we have ever raised in the Negro struggle has been a democratic slogan—for the vote, end of the poll tax, FEPC, equal rights in restaurants, transportation, parks, pools, etc. These are all democratic slogans.

What is the Negro struggle after all? It is the struggle for the completion of the democratic tasks not carried out in the South by the second revolution in this country. Because of the reactionary character of capitalism today

we know it will not carry out the unfulfilled democratic revolution in the South. The converse of that proposition is—as we know from the concept of the permanent revolution—that only the working class will carry out that task in the South and by uprooting the seedbed of Jim Crow it will begin the solution of discrimination against the Negroes not only in the South but throughout the country.

In other words the Negro struggle is a struggle for democratic demands. As we have studied the permanent revolution we realize the Negro struggle for full democratic rights is a stage of a continuous process which will continue on to the social revolution.

On the slogan itself. First of all there was never any idea in my mind that we were advancing it to the exclusion of any other slogan. It doesn't exclude defense guards. I disagree with Ring on the reading of Marcy's document; that Marcy is calling for defense guards in place of this slogan. Marcy discusses defense guards as an alternative, and then says that the defense guard slogan does not seem to be opportune at this moment and that maybe some variant could be found. If so, I agree with Marcy on this point. For me, the defense guard slogan is purely a matter of practicality and timing. I would be against raising it for the Mississippi situation on the question of timing and other practical consequences of it, not only on timing but how it would be received by the Negro people in the North as well as in the South. We can't monkey around with defense guard slogans. If you mean organize defense guards *now*, you have to calculate what the effect will be. If it is raised at the wrong time, it can be an element which can lead to very disastrous situation for the Negroes. If raised at the wrong time, it can polarize the whole fight on color lines. Our task is to try to prevent this polarization so that the whites figure it is only an issue raised, but try to raise it in such a situation where the possibility of Mississippi defense guards is possible.

I just want to repeat that troops to Mississippi doesn't exclude defense guard slogans. The latter should be considered on the practical basis of timing.

We have demanded that Southern Jim Crow officials punish the lynchers. Those who object to the demand that federal troops take over in Mississippi should now go back and show how this demand differs. We are right in the midst of demanding that the FBI investigate the Till murder, blasting the FBI and joining the Negro leaders of the more militant variety in demanding FBI action. We have done this in the past, on the killing of Harry T. Moore. We demanded that the FBI solve the case and not kid around.

Is the FBI any better than the federal army, or do we have some special fetishism about the army? Do we divide the capitalist state like some liberals, seeing the capitalist state in part as a social service state that we can demand unemployment compensation or FEPC or socialized medicine of, and the openly repressive forces which are taboo for us as far as demands go? This is wrong, trying to separate the state into such categories. You can see behind everything, seemingly the most harmless measure, the force of the state. Make a left turn on 14th Street where it says no turn, the cop blows his whistle and writes out a ticket. If you refuse to take the ticket, he will start to arrest you. If you refuse to be arrested,

he pulls out his gun: That is an openly repressive thing. If you take his gun, other cops will come to his defense. If passersby come to your assistance you will have a street fight. If your side is getting on top, the National Guard will be called out. If the National Guard can't cope with the masses in the street, the federal troops will be called on. My point in reducing this to an absurdity is to show that behind every government measure or agency is the force of the state. Even garbage collection in the last analysis is backed up by what we know the state is.

When we raise the slogan of troops to Mississippi, we are raising it to the Negro people and anti-Jim-Crow white workers. We are saying, in effect, agitate for this demand that the politicians in Washington send troops. They don't want to do it. We know the social reasons why. In this process if the workers and Negroes take up the demand, think it feasible, think it the answer, and if they start demanding this from the capitalist politicians, then countless Negro and white workers will be educated as to illusions they now have about liberal capitalist politicians.

What about the Southern Negroes? They won't be able to solve the situation by themselves. To the extent that they get help from allies in the North that strengthens them and acts as a weapon in their hands against their enemies there.

I think this demand picked up by the Northern Negroes and white workers and the press, encourages the Southern Negroes. It makes them feel their Northern allies have found a tangible way of intervening in the South and also strengthens them in that it frightens and makes the Bourbons of the South go slow because of the possibility of actual intervention against them.

Does this slogan sow illusions? To the extent that the capitalist politicians resist, it makes the Negro come to the conclusion that the government could do something about Mississippi, but won't. If they come to that conclusion, that is a step toward dispelling illusions about the federal government, if they come to the conclusion that the federal government refuses to enforce the Constitution for Negroes in the South. One of the great illusions sown by the Negro and labor leaders is that while the Southern state governments are viciously Jim Crow, the federal government and the Supreme Court is better disposed toward Negroes. This is an illusion which exists among the Negroes and it is something we want to strike a blow at by showing that the liberal capitalist does not want to change the social situation in the South. To the extent that we expose the federal government and northern capitalist politicians, we help destroy the illusions fed on the sweet talk of the liberal Congressmen and the crumbs contained in executive orders of the president.

If the movement for sending federal troops to the South became so powerful in this country — and I don't think that is excluded that it could happen — we must remember the Negroes have wrested other concessions from the capitalist government. This government chooses between the lesser evils, when forced to. It was forced to declare integration in the army. The *Pittsburgh Courier*, incidentally, when calling for troops to the South had a big picture under the open letter, of Negro and white soldiers marching in formation and said send *them* to Mississippi. I don't think the possibility of the federal government send-

ing troops is automatically excluded, if the movement became powerful enough. If the troops were sent would this make the Negro people believe the federal government was their savior? Not if you see the Negro struggle as an unfolding struggle. Not at all. I dismiss as completely wrong Marcy's position that the troops upon arrival in Mississippi would massacre the Negroes. If the troops were sent because of pressure on the government by the labor movement and Negroes, certainly they won't be sent to massacre Negroes. The government would be attempting to placate this opinion. It would try to pacify this movement with limited action and we, and the militant Negroes, would demand more action. Hundreds of demands would arise out of the federal troops being here — arrest and trial of racists guilty of past crimes, and of state officials who were accessories after the fact, who covered up the lynchings; the demand for free elections and protection in the Delta of Negroes elected as mayors, sheriffs, etc., where the Negroes number about 80% of the population; the demand for protection by arming Negro deputies to protect the officials; the demand for equality on buses, in the parks, in the restaurants. All the demands of the Negro struggle could be raised there. In the plantation country, where the Negroes are daily robbed, the demand could be raised for complete enforcement of their legal rights in the form of contracts, payments, etc., of the economic rights of Negro agricultural workers, tenants, sharecroppers; their right to organize unions.

This would mean a continuous mobilization of the Negro people in the South, their allies in the rest of the country, for *more and more* if federal troops were sent there. The whole tendency of the federal government would be to give as little as possible. Here you have the continuous development of the struggle.

Finally, I would like to point out that this slogan has already in my opinion done some good things. It has already helped discredit and expose the official leaders of the Negro movement and of the trade union movement who resist this demand. Wilkins and all those of the NAACP are against this. They maneuver the whole civil rights demonstration in Washington so that there is no possibility of its getting out of hand and becoming a big movement on the basis of this demand.

On this demand — it gives the Negro people an action demand. It could give the March-on-Washington an objective. What else do you propose for such a march? Do you demand that the marchers get there in great numbers and that Congress pass certain laws? All right, they pass certain laws, but that won't solve the Mississippi situation. And the Negro people of this country want something done *now*. All right, certain laws are passed, assuming they could be passed against filibuster and everything. Then these laws are ignored by the Southern states. The Negro people will want enforcement. If they call for enforcement — and that word in the last analysis means force and force, in the last analysis for any government, is troops, are we going to be in a position of drawing back and saying "oh no, we'll go along with you and call for laws by the capitalist government, but not for armed enforcement. That would be against our principles."

One important thing this slogan does is that it shows the Negro people and white workers that drastic mea-

tures in the South are possible. The attitude for a long time, encouraged by the officials of the state and federal governments in this country, is that nothing can really be done in the South. If Congress did pass appropriate laws, the southern officials would ignore them. They would resist them. You could get all the legislation in the world passed in Washington and that wouldn't change things in Mississippi. This is a widespread belief among the Negroes. Some say nothing will be changed in the South and that the Negroes will leave and come North. Others say that the only thing that could change the South is a revolution. That is a good conclusion. But they know the Negroes are a minority there and until the southern white working class emerges as the ally of the Negroes, then such a solution seems impossible to them. The conclusion of large numbers is that for the present and near future nothing can be done in the South to change the situation as in Mississippi. By raising the slogan to send troops to change the situation immediately, we show that

something can be done. This slogan can make them realize that something could be done, immediately.

I would also like to point out that it is evoking a response. All the Negroes we have talked to about the slogan think it is an excellent slogan and start repeating it in their arguments. We have had the phenomenon of the Negro press picking our stuff up and reprinting it. That shows that certain sections seem to think it is a good idea. Are these the opportunists or militants? I don't think there is any question about it. The opportunism of the Negro movement is enthroned in the official leadership. They have demonstrated a most extreme resistance to this slogan, because they know it would break them from their Democratic and labor bureaucratic allies, if adopted. But it puts every bureaucratic labor politician on the spot. The elements raising it in the Negro movement are the ones moving left or who respond to the pressures that come from the left.

Appendix

[The following letter from Sam Marcy to the leading bodies of the SWP has been abridged to half its original length for space reasons. The entire text was published in *SWP Discussion Bulletin*, Volume 18, No. 12, October 1957.

[Marcy was then a member of the SWP National Committee and leader of the party's branch in Buffalo, New York. For a number of years he had led a tendency that differed with the SWP's evaluation of Stalinism, the class nature of the state, and other questions. These differences sharpened considerably after the Hungarian revolution

of 1956. Marcy denounced the workers' uprising as "counterrevolutionary" and supported the Soviet military suppression of it.

[His views on the demand to send federal troops to the South were strongly influenced by his theory of the state, which he reduced to bodies of armed men alone. This theory led him to reject any demands that the government use armed force to enforce civil rights laws, etc.

[In 1959, Marcy's grouping walked out of the SWP and later formed the Workers World Party and its youth group, Youth Against War and Fascism.]

January 21, 1956

I am opposed to the slogan of "Federal Troops to Mississippi" because it is inconsistent with our principled position on the nature of the bourgeois state and fosters the illusion that freedom from oppression can be brought to the Negro masses on the bayonets of the capitalist army. . . .

The Morgan-Rockefeller-Dupont government is not going to send federal troops to "punish" its satellite state of Mississippi (with or without a march on Washington), nor will it use its army to enforce the rights of the Negro people or anything like it. If ever it sends troops, it will be to suppress the Negro masses, not to aid them. . . .

It is said that the intent and purpose of the slogan for federal troops is "to put the government on the spot" and thereby to "expose" it because the government will never send troops to defend the rights of the Negro masses in the South.

The validity of the slogan, however, cannot at all be determined by the *subjective design*, intent or purpose of its authors, no matter how laudable these might be, but only by its *objective* political effect on the masses. In Marxism, the word "expose" means to show or demonstrate the *class essence* of a given phenomenon. Asking for federal (capitalist) troops to Mississippi does not *expose*, but on the contrary, *conceals* the class essence of

the terrorist apparatus of the bourgeoisie, its capitalist army. Rather than illuminate its class essence, it obscures the real significance and meaning of the capitalist class *against* the working class and oppressed minorities. The slogan's effect is to stifle the creative initiative of the masses toward *independent* struggle and to increase their reliance on the capitalist state.

The putting in motion of a capitalist army—the terrorist apparatus of the bourgeoisie—is *in and of itself* a reactionary move. Only consistent work toward the substitution of the capitalist army by a people's militia or workers' defense guard is progressive. If it is difficult for us to develop this concept under the present conditions, that is no reason to substitute a bourgeois concept for it.

It is perfectly correct and useful, of course, to raise *rhetorically* the question: "Why does not the Eisenhower administration send troops to defend the rights of the Negro masses in Mississippi?" *provided*, of course, we categorically answer in the same breath, that the reason for it is that Eisenhower can only use the capitalist army to suppress the Negro masses, not to aid them. . . .

In Czarist Russia not a few national minorities were terrorized by the Great Russians, and the record of pogroms is only too well known to need further elaboration. But there never was an instant when the Bolsheviks called for Czarist troops to defend minority peoples against

massacre and pogrom by the Black Hundreds. There is no principled difference between Czarist and Wall Street troops. They have a common class character.

Nor is there any precedent whatever for such a slogan in our national history. There has been only one recent example in modern times where the federal government sent troops, and that was in the infamous Detroit anti-Negro riot of 1943. Contrary to popular assumption fostered by bourgeois liberals and New Dealers, Roosevelt dispatched his troops, only after persistent reports that Negroes (not whites) were destroying the property of the whites. "Negroes had begun to stone white cars and to destroy white-owned property in Paradise Valley. By 3 AM (June 21), the Police Commissioner regarded the situation as out of control." Also, at about the same time, a group of Negro soldiers stationed at Fort Custer, some hundred forty miles west of Detroit, attempted to seize arms and "start a pilgrimage to Detroit. They wanted to go to Detroit to assist their families," Col. Ralph Willamuth, Post Commander is quoted as saying. But prompt, brutal action by the "military authorities restored order" by arresting the Negro soldiers.

It was *at that time* that Roosevelt sent the federal troops! And when they arrived there, "by midnight of that day, the U.S. Army had established an 'armed truce' between the warring factions," as it was described in the official reports. Roosevelt's federal troops acted in a typically Bonapartist, i.e., treacherous, fashion between the so-called "two warring factions," but not as a partisan of the hunted and persecuted Negro people.

It is significant that requests for martial law and federal troops was opposed by the prominent Negro preacher Rev. Horace White, because he said, federal troops meant martial law, and "martial law has always worked to the detriment of the Negro people." If martial law, the rule of the army, worked to the detriment of the Negro people in the heart of labor's citadel, Detroit, how can we tell the Negro people that the rule of the same capitalist army "could" as Thayer says, "take over all law enforcement and stay there until Negro rights were fully established."

And has not every anti-Negro riot, beginning with the East St. Louis so-called race riot of 1917 all the way up to and including the infamous Detroit pogrom of 1943, proven that the police, state militia, and federal troops act in unison against the Negro masses?

That's the historic pattern of repression against every oppressed minority by the oppressor capitalist government. . . .

The army is the terrorist apparatus of the bourgeois state, which in its turn is merely "an instrument of class oppression"—"the national war engine of capital against labor," as Marx so splendidly phrases it in his *Civil War in France*. The capitalist state is in fact, said Marx, "a public force organized for social enslavement," and "an engine of class despotism." That is why Marx counterposed to the standing *capitalist* army, the *people's* militia.

The *people's* militia or the standing (*capitalist*) army? The conflict between the two slogans is as deep and irreconcilable as is the class struggle itself. The latter is an instrument of finance capital, the former an instrument of the working class for self defense—it is the people armed.

It is, therefore, not a question of a tactic, but of a principled (class) question.

If the capitalist army (one of the two prime pillars of the state) is as Marx said, "a force for social enslavement," how can we tell the masses that it can carry out a civilizing mission in Mississippi, as Breitman puts it. If it is an engine of capitalist despotism, how can it be a vehicle for Negro liberation, which is a task of the labor movement, Negro and white? . . .

The heart of the problem lies *now* and *always* with *our* class—with arousing the labor movement, with welding class solidarity between Negro and white workers, and with the organization of Defense Guards, when that becomes timely and appropriate. One may argue about the timeliness and propriety of Defense Guards, but it is something else again to beckon enemy class forces from the other side of the barricades. It is true that the labor movement is shackled by a case-hardened labor bureaucracy that is deaf to the cries of the Negro people in the South as well as the North, and that the working class has not yet emerged to the level of class consciousness whereby it can challenge it. But the absence of the necessary class consciousness on the part of *our* class cannot be substituted with the instrumentality of our enemy class. Rather than ask for the "national war engine of capital," as Marx called it, we've got to build our own engine of class defense.

In the second installment of his speech (10/19/55) under the sub-heading "Will federal government send troops?" Comrade Breitman says, "It positively won't unless there is a mass demand and a mass struggle for federal intervention" (with troops). "But . . . will it intervene if there is a mass struggle and mass pressure for it? Here an absolute answer is difficult . . . the final answer will depend on the relationship of forces—on the outcome of the struggle between those who want Jim Crow terrorism ended and those who want it continued."

It is clear that Comrade Breitman believes that the Federal troops demand is analogous to the demands contained in our Transitional Program. There Trotsky makes it crystal clear that "the realizability or unrealizability in the given instance (i.e., of transitional demands—S.M.) is a question of the relationship of forces, which can be decided only by the struggle. (*Death Agony of Capitalism*, LT)

But what is the difference between a demand like *Federal troops to Mississippi* and the various demands in our transitional program, such as "Let the People Vote on War" and others.

The difference lies in that the latter slogan impels the masses toward a "revolutionary invasion" of the "holy of holies"—the right of the capitalist state to make war, and in addition, it operates as a most effective *attack* upon it. The slogan of *federal troops to Mississippi* is not an attack on the capitalist state, but a masking, a disguising, and an embellishment of the very functions of the bourgeois state, and operates to impel the masses to defend it rather than attack it. (If the capitalist state can send federal troops to liberate Mississippi, should this state not be defended?)

The transitional slogans promote distrust and lack of confidence in the capitalist state and its politicians. The federal troops slogan generates confidence in the state, and particularly its army. It also sows the illusion that

there is a Chinese wall between the federal (capitalist) government and its constituent state parts.

But perhaps this slogan takes on an entirely different meaning when it is combined with admonitions to the masses for mass action such as demonstrations or marches, such as a March on Washington to demand federal troops. Absolutely not! It would be no different than those giant demonstrations "to call upon the government to disarm the fascists" which were the political stock in trade of the Social-Democrats and the Stalinists in the People's Front era. While the slogan calling upon the government to disarm the fascists may appear to be entirely dissimilar to the federal troops slogan, this is only so in form. In political content, it is the same. Both slogans generate in the masses trust and confidence in their capitalist national (federal) army, to carry out a progressive mission. The national (federal) army in France, Germany, and Austria not only did not disarm the fascists, but conspired with them and fraternized with them in the end. . . .

"All the civil rights laws are needed and should be passed" says Thayer, "but they will be flouted by the Mississippi authorities, as the present laws and constitutional rights of the Negro people are flouted. What is needed is to enforce the civil rights of the Negro people in Mississippi . . ." Hence the need for capitalist federal troops!

The contradiction between law and fact, between legal fiction and class reality is a contradiction characteristic of all societies split into antagonistic classes. Imperialist society is merely distinguished from its predecessors by the greater monstrosity and heinousness of the contradiction. Bourgeois liberals who see the crying contradiction between law and fact, appeal to "enforcement agencies" to resolve the contradiction. They overlook in passing, however, that the law enforcement agencies are mere organs of class domination for the purpose of enforcing class legislation.

It is different with the legislation passed on behalf of labor and oppressed minorities. These are in the nature of concessions, "byproducts of the revolutionary class struggle." Such legislation is enforced — not by the law enforcement agencies — (army, police, bureaucracy) of the bourgeoisie, but in spite of them. Enforcement takes place by the continued struggle or threat of struggle of the workers and oppressed minorities in opposition to law enforcement agencies. Even such generally accepted conditions as the eight hour day goes unenforced where there is no union to protect it, as can easily be gathered from any worker in an unorganized shop. Wherever the class struggle is dormant or suffers defeats over a period of time, labor and civil rights legislation tend to become a dead letter — sometimes a bitter joke.

To ask the army to enforce civil rights is to ask the left hand of finance capital to nullify what the right hand validates every hour of every day of the year.

The slogan for *federal troops to Mississippi* is alleged to have originated from the depth of the Negro people. In reality it represents the ideas of the bourgeois and petit-bourgeois Negro reformists, who look to the Wall Street government, rather than to the Negro masses and the labor movement for support against the white supremacists' terror. These leaders either overlook, or seek to cover up the class character of the capitalist attacks

against the Negro people. Instead they foster the illusion that the capitalist government will bring liberation to the South from above. They believe that the Washington government is a supra-class government. Hence it is perfectly logical for them, from the point of view of their ideology, to ask the government to send its troops to defend the rights of the Negro people. In their eyes it is not a question of different classes, but of different men, and different methods. Such is the meaning of the *Pittsburgh Courier's* call upon Eisenhower, (whom they supported in 1952) to dispatch federal troops to Mississippi. "Are these purveyors of hate from Mississippi's hell-hole bigger than the U.S. government?" the *Courier* asks. No, it is not bigger than the U.S. government, but it is a constituent part of its class composition — flesh of the flesh and bone of the bone of the same class fraternity to which the *Pittsburgh Courier* is appealing for help. Only a question of method, only a family quarrel on how best to rob and exploit the Negro as well as the white workers separates the ruling financial oligarchy into opposing cliques.

To counterpose the government of the U.S. to the government of Mississippi — to draw a distinction between the federal army and its various state appendages, is to gloss over their identical class character.

This is what we've got to warn the workers, Negro and white. But liberals point to the Supreme Court's anti-segregation decision as confirmation of their view. However, the latter, like the Supreme Court's decision validating the Wagner Act (collective bargaining law) was merely a shadow — reflecting the substance of a deep struggle that was raging from coast to coast. While the Wagner Act served as an impetus to further the struggle, it was in and of itself and still is, a mere shadow totally devoid of any independent strength. The right to collective bargaining was won on the picket line in combat against judges, politicians, and militiamen.

The Supreme Court decision on antisegregation is a product of the combined struggle of the Negro and white masses at home, and was profoundly aided by all the anti-imperialist struggles abroad, some of which won their independence from imperialism in combat against the very Wall Street army which it is said may bring liberation to Mississippi.

Our job is to combat these illusions, and to show that the road of Negro liberation in the South (as well as in the North) can only be found via the path of the class struggle and class solidarity between the Negro and white workers. The image of the reality of an intervening capitalist army can only serve to derail the struggle. . . .

In sum and substance, there has been a blurring of class lines on this whole question. The slogan should be dropped, and a class slogan corresponding to the class interests of the Negro and white workers substituted for it.

Our slogans are in the first place determined by the objective orientation and need of the masses. Under mounting violence visited upon the Negro masses, the necessity for self-defense will inevitably orient the masses in the direction of arming themselves.

While the slogan of Workers Defense Guards may appear to be premature and not suited for the moment, I am certain that a milder form of it will take hold as it has already taken hold in cities like Mound Bayou and others, and will be reshaped and remoulded by the mass movement to meet its concrete needs.