

WORKERS VANGUARD

December 1974

Racism, Unemployment, Inflation...

Not White Against Black, But Class Against Class!

The busing crisis in Boston has posed the issue of racial equality more sharply than at any time since the end of the civil rights movement in the mid-1960's. A victory for the racists here would set back the struggle against discrimination throughout the country.

It is no secret that anti-busing forces in New York, Denver and elsewhere have been watching events in Boston closely. So are the American Nazi Party and Ku Klux Klan, who surfaced at the beginning of the white school boycott in September. They hope to fan race hatred and fascist sentiments by a new drive against integration.

As usual, the liberals piously deplore the racist offensive while doing nothing to stop it. They have repeatedly voted in Congress against "forced busing" and in July the Supreme Court knocked down cross-district busing, thereby exempting the lily-white suburbs. In Boston liberal Mayor Kevin White announced in early October that the present integration plan "cannot be implemented." Even the judge who ordered the busing is now talking of a compromise exempting certain schools.

Fundamentally, events in Boston are part of a broad attack on minority rights nationally. Murders of defenseless black people by trigger-happy cops in Atlanta, Boston, California, Detroit and New York; "Operation Zebra," a dragnet aimed at all young black males in San Francisco; a "police riot" against Puerto Ricans in Newark—these are only some of the signs of the times. Ironically, some of the worst cop atrocities have occurred in cities with black mayors.

The offensive against racial minorities is intimately linked with the escalating economic crisis. During the 1960's the incomes of the black and Latin population were slowly increasing relative to those of whites. Since 1972 this trend has now been sharply reversed as the "last hired" are "first fired." With unemployment shooting up by almost 50 percent in the last year, the rate for black workers hit 11.7 percent in November. For black youth it is already a staggering 37.5 percent.

With the abandonment of racial minorities by the liberals and the discrediting of black Democrats, the fact that the only genuine allies of the racially oppressed with a program for struggle are communists can be made crystal clear. Large numbers of militants can see that the fight for democratic rights and equality for minorities must be part of a united working-class offensive against capitalist rule.

Since the beginning of the reactionary segregationist drive in Boston the Spartacist League has energetically fought for independent mobilization of the anti-racist forces. As early as September 22, the SL sent a letter to Boston-area trade unions, black organizations and socialist groups urging a mass united-front demonstration around the demand, "Stop the Racist Attacks Against Black School Children."

The response from the black Democratic politicians was complete passivity. Their "strategy"—nothing but an excuse for inaction—was to request federal intervention. When the NAACP/Massachusetts Legislative Black Cau-

cus finally called for a demonstration of pro-busing forces, they built it halfheartedly and even excluded whites from the Roxbury march. Thus it was not surprising that only 700 showed up on October 13.

As the busing conflict dragged on, however, several left groups and liberal politicians have smelled an opportunity to enhance their images with a limited display of "mass action." This was the purpose of the November 30 rally at Boston City Hall, called by the Communist Party-led National Alliance Against Racism and Political Repression, which featured Mrs. Coretta King. The same is true for the December 14 march being built around State Senator-elect Bill Owens (see box). Neither have raised anything but the most vague, liberal demands.

While the Spartacist League called for labor/black defense of the bused school children, the liberal union bureaucrats have done nothing. Their biggest effort to date was an insipid statement by the civil rights committee of the state AFL-CIO which couldn't even say outright that it supported busing. Even those unions most directly affected—like the Meatcutters, which cannot use its union hall in South Boston be-

cause of racist attacks and vandalism of the members' cars—have failed to mobilize for an integrated labor defense.

The fight for democratic rights of minorities must be linked to a broad program of class struggle against the capitalist system. It was precisely the failure of the civil rights movement to separate itself from the Democratic Party and to raise an independent working-class program which led to its collapse following the passage of the Civil Rights Act. And it was the failure of the antiwar movement to separate itself from the liberals which likewise led to its disappearance after the phony Paris "peace treaty."

A struggle to provide jobs and protection against inflation for all working people, through a sliding scale of wages and hours ("30 hours' work for 40 hours' pay," full cost-of-living escalator), would go a long way toward overcoming racial divisions in the working class. Only a communist perspective which links the fight against racism to the struggles of the working class against its capitalist masters can open the road to socialist revolution and the liberation of all the oppressed.

Smash Anti-Busing Offensive in Boston!



Jean-Louis Yvon, a black worker from Haiti being attacked by racist mob in Boston.

- No trust in capitalist politicians/traops/caps: Black/labor defense against racist attacks!
- Implement the busing plan! Busing into the suburbs! Integrated free quality education for all!
- No layoffs! Factory occupations against shutdowns! Unlimited, unconditional unemployment insurance! 30-for-40—Jobs for all!
- Smash Inflation! For a full cost-of-living escalator for all workers, welfare recipients and pensioners!
- Not white against black, but class against class! Seize the banks/oil/auta/coal with workers control! Oust the labor fakers—Build a workers party—Forward to a workers government!

"Emergency Committee": A Liberal Sham

For A Class-Struggle Contingent on December 14

A "Freedom March for Human Dignity" has been announced for Boston and other major cities around the country on December 14. Organized by the Emergency Committee for a National Mobilization Against Racism, the Boston rally has a long list of several hundred sponsors, including trade-union bureaucrats, black organizations, left groups and prominent liberals. The three slogans on the leaflet for the national march are "No to Institutionalized Racism; No to Racist Mob Violence and No to Racism in Education."

The rally is built around and tightly controlled by a single black Democratic Party politician, Bill Owens. Owens, who recently became the only black state senator in Massachusetts, is eager to boost his career by attaching his name to a demonstration of national significance.

Owens can afford a display of "militancy" as long as he has iron-clad veto power over the decisions of the "Emergency Committee": the character of leaflets, slogans, route of march, speakers at the rally, etc. Consequently, neither the hundreds of sponsoring organizations and individuals nor the groups which have been most active in building the demonstration—Youth Against War and Fascism and the Socialist Workers Party—are making key decisions. They are only the water boys.

The national leaflet highlights excerpts from Owens' press conference statement, making clear that the rally is to be a pious appeal to "justice loving people from all fifty states."

The Spartacist League is unable to endorse this demonstration which is under the organizational control of the Democratic Party politician Bill Owens. We have no confidence in the organizers of this demonstration who are doing their best to guarantee that it will be a liberal/pacifist pep rally—a vehicle for the electoral ambitions of bourgeois politicians and a forum for liberal demands such as "Troops to Boston."

For revolutionaries to stand by and permit the opportunists and their liberal allies to use the just outrage against the racist anti-busing forces to spread liberal/pacifist illusions would be an abdication of our responsibility to expose these criminal frauds. Thus we will march in the December 14 demonstration in our own contingent, together with those who agree with the perspective of independent labor/black action against the racists, under class-struggle banners.

No Troops to Boston, For Labor/Black Defense!

In the Boston busing crisis there have been sharp differences between the programs raised by various groups which claim to be socialist. Take the issue of busing, for example: Some support it, some don't. Why?

For the Spartacist League it is a question of democratic and working-class principles. We support the maximum political, economic and social equality among different sections of the working people. Discrimination divides the workers and makes it more difficult to unite against the common enemy. The SL stands for integration of the schools as part of the struggle for racial equality, and we therefore support busing as a means (although distorted and rather artificial) of achieving at least a certain degree of integration.

For the opportunists the question of busing is much more complicated. In the past, most have supported nationalist programs for "community control" of schools in the black ghettos. This is now doubly embarrassing to them, since black community control logically leads to demands for community control by poor whites (a cover for racist reaction) as well as being logically counterposed to busing. (What does black control of Martin Luther King School mean if a majority of the students are white as a result of busing?)

Some, like the social-democratic International Socialists, have quietly dropped their earlier opposition to busing. Others, like the reformist Socialist Workers Party, invent elaborate "explanations" for their new-found enthusiasm. What these come down to is that the SWP will support whatever the "leaders of the Black community" call for.

One group that did not react so quickly in the busing crisis was the Maoist Revolutionary Union. Discovering that many white workers oppose busing with the excuse that it will not provide "quality education," the RU denounced busing as a "capitalist hoax." One RU leaflet proclaimed, "We can't write off all white resistance to the busing plan as just racist." Another featured a stop sign, the symbol being used by the Hicks forces. This line of capitulating to white racism was translated into a front-page headline in *Revolution* (October 1974) proclaiming: "People Must Unite To Smash Boston Busing Plan."

Under fire from just about every other left organization, the Revolutionary Union has retreated, announcing that its comrades who used the stop sign were "not aware that it was being used by reactionaries" (!), and that the headline "overemphasize[d] the question of opposing the busing plan" (*Revolution*, November 1974). What is significant about this, however, is the fact that the RU simply carried to its logical conclusion an opportunist line which only a few weeks beforehand was supported by most of the left.

SWP Calls for the Bosses' Army

Another hotly disputed issue is the call for federal troops by black liberals and Mayor White. The two left groups who have actively raised this slogan in Boston are the Socialist Workers Party and the Communist Party. The CP does

so because its whole strategy is to build support for liberal Democrats under the slogan of an "anti-monopoly coalition." The SWP claims to have a different position.

"We completely support the demands made by leaders of the Black community that federal troops be sent to Boston..." declared SWP candidates for Massachusetts state offices on October 9. Thus in the present class-divided society it turns out that "the Black community" is represented by... Democrats like Mel King, Tom Atkins and Bill Owens. These bourgeois politicians call for bringing in the U.S. Army for the same reason they have in the past supported liberal Mayor White: they seek to build illusions that black people can achieve justice by "working within the system."

In contrast to the reformist SWP, which chases after the black Democrats in search of instant popularity,



Demonstration at Boston City Hall, November 30.

the Spartacist League is a revolutionary Marxist, i.e., Trotskyist, organization. We have repeatedly warned black people and working-class militants in Boston that they cannot rely on the capitalist government to protect them against racist mobs and achieve integration of the schools. Federal troops, just as much as the local police or National Guard, are the armed fist of the bourgeois state, the enemy of working people.

In the 11 October issue of *Workers Vanguard* we wrote, against those who call for federal troops, that "Instead of relying on local or federal government for protection, black people and all working people must depend on their own organizations for defense. 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." We pointed out that troops may well be sent to Boston, not to enforce integration but to maintain segregationist "law and order" and prevent any organized defense by black and union militants.

Although SWP leader Joseph Hansen called this demand for labor/black defense "a commendable stand" in the 25 November *Intercontinental Press*, the SWP in Boston has repeatedly attacked our position. "The call for trade-union defense guards isn't realistic right now," writes SWP hack Peter Camejo in the 1 November *Militant*. "... 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 the needs of the Black community." He goes on to say that what the black community needs today is "meaningful solutions," namely federal troops.

There are two sharply opposed lines here. The Spartacist League condemns the call for troops as an expression of confidence in the government, a betrayal of elementary Marxist principles and a threat to the black population of Boston. The SWP, on the other hand, labels our call for labor/black defense an "unrealistic" demand of "sectarians." Militants who wish to lead forward the struggles of

the workers and oppressed minorities cannot, as does the SWP, depend on the black Democrats to make up their minds for them about which policy is correct.

The SWP's "Meaningful Solution"

Let us look more closely at the SWP's "meaningful solution." In recent articles these reformists argue that while troops are often used against the workers, they are sometimes used against the reactionaries. Their two favorite examples are Little Rock in 1957 and Selma, Alabama, in 1965. Camejo, for example, says that the dispatch of U.S. troops to Little Rock "demoralized the racists and broke the back of the racist movement."

What actually happened was quite different. In Little Rock, following a desegregation order from the federal court a small group of black children

drive to register black voters. After weeks of harassment, including attacks by state troopers on a civil rights demonstration, a march was held from Selma to Montgomery, the state capital. The Student Non-Violent Co-ordinating Committee called for troops as did the SWP. And they got them.

The "protection" provided by U.S. authorities, however, was far from reliable. After the Montgomery rally, troops were precipitously withdrawn, and on the way back to Selma one of the marchers was murdered by a shot from a car full of Ku Klux Klansmen... and an FBI informer.

No Troops to Boston!

But it is not necessary to look at events ten or twenty years ago. What sending troops to Boston would mean can be clearly seen by looking at the development of the present busing crisis.

The case of the Columbia Point housing project near South Boston, for instance. After several days of escalating provocations by whites driving through the project screaming obscenities and racial slurs, on September 21 about 250 tenants formed a human barricade across the street in order to keep out the vigilantes. Two days later, project residents issued a set of demands including "complete and effective police protection for our children against mob violence..."

They got police "protection," all right. Cops imposed a brutal military occupation of Columbia Point, using guard dogs and police with M-16s stationed on the rooftops. Several tenants were hospitalized as the result of police brutality, and the project's church and community center were vandalized by the official representatives of "law and order."

And then there is the fact that despite two weeks of racist harassment of black students, an urgent call for federal troops was made by liberals only when black youths began to respond by attacking whites in the Roxbury ghetto. As the *Boston Globe* (9 October) headline put it: "Boston asks for US marshals as violence spreads to Roxbury."

After asserting that federal troops aided black people in Selma and Little Rock, the SWP's *Militant* (1 November) stated: "The same dynamic would operate in Boston." The same dynamic—in which troops act as the guardians of capitalism, repressing any attempts at independent defense by black and labor organizations—would indeed operate in Boston. But it is not the "dynamic" the SWP imagines!

By calling for U.S. troops to enforce desegregation in Boston the SWP and CP only reinforce liberal illusions that the state can serve either the racists or the working class and oppressed minorities. By raising this demand, the reformists take the responsibility (whether they want it or not) for a possible invasion by the bourgeois authorities which would clamp martial law on the ghetto and prevent any independent mobilization.

If, as the SWP argues, labor defense guards are "not counterposed" to federal troops, we invite these fakers to try organizing them while the 82nd Airborne Division is occupying Roxbury!

Only by relying on their own forces, by organizing integrated working-class defense, can the threatened black population and union militants in Boston protect themselves from racist attack.

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE:

- This subject index covers issues of *Workers Vanguard* published during 1974, from issue No. 35 (4 January) through the end-of-the-year issue No. 58 (6 December).
- The fullest listing is by **SUBJECT**. Subject headings are arranged alphabetically; entries are listed chronologically with the exception of corrections which immediately follow the relevant entry. Names, personalities, organizations mentioned in articles are usually not listed separately. No article is listed twice; refer to cross references for guidance in locating the subject heading for particular articles.
- Entries relating to foreign countries are listed under geographical headings, and not necessarily under any other subject heading. Unless listed separately for some unusual reason, all foreign political organizations are listed under appropriate geographical heads; U.S. political organizations are listed under their organizational names.
- Trade-union articles dealing with U.S. labor issues are listed under the name of the occupation, e.g., **AUTO WORKERS**, **MINE WORKERS**, **PHONE WORKERS**, etc. Articles dealing with labor issues in other countries are listed under the appropriate geographical heading.
- Articles dealing with the Arab-Israeli conflict and directly related countries and issues (e.g., Egypt, Palestine) will be found under the major subject head: **NEAR EAST**.

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means
Headline of Article, Issue No. 58, 6 December 1974 (pages 3, 8, 9)
- An asterisk after the page location of an entry indicates that a correction entry immediately follows.
- Entries are listed under subject heads. In some cases, subject heads are broken up into subcategories. These subcategories are listed immediately after the initial subject head for a topic (e.g., **Longshore Workers: Genl.**—see **Longshore Workers: Chile Boycott**, **Longshore Workers: Defense/Workers Democracy**).
- Abbreviations used in entries are:
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