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Proposal to Amend Resolution
"The Class Struggle Road to Negro Equality"
By Deleting Troops Slogan

By Jean Blake

Cleveland, Ohio
September 19, 1957

To the National Committee
Socialist Workers Party

I hereby submit the following motion for your immediate consideration:

AMENDMENT TO THE RESOLUTION, "THE CLASS STRUGGLE ROAD TO NEGRO EQUALITY," adopted at the 1957 Convention of the Socialist Workers Party, and edited and published in The Militant of August 26, 1957.

The following sentence shall be deleted from the resolution: "Labor should give militant backing to demands for Presidential enforcement of Negro rights, including the use of federal troops against the white supremacists where tactical considerations warrant such a demand." (Last sentence of paragraph 3, column 5, page 3, in The Militant.)

In the first sentence of the following paragraph, "Full support must also be given the colored freedom fighters in taking measures for their own self-defense..." the word "also" shall be deleted.

The purpose of this amendment is to clarify and improve the party's position on the class struggle road to Negro equality by rejecting the federal troops slogans as a part of our arsenal of transitional demands.

It was clear at the convention that widespread doubts, reservations and opposition to the federal troops slogan exist in the party. Many recorded their reservations in statements submitted with their votes. A majority voted to approve the line of the Political Committee draft resolution on the Class Struggle Road to Negro Equality, and to continue the discussion.

The discussion did not continue after the convention for a number of reasons. Among them was the view many of us held that there would be no immediate pressing for the federal troops slogan or other controversial issues and that a more leisurely and educational discussion would ensue.

However, events in the South demand that we clarify and sharpen our line at once if we are to participate effectively in the struggle. The disorienting effect of the federal troops "demand" was glaringly apparent in the Sept. 16 Militant. At a time when the role of the state is being revealed in classic terms by Faubus' use of troops and Eisenhower's sympathetic understanding, The Militant, handcuffed by an incorrect line, rails at the state for not disciplining its subordinates, instead of raising the obvious traditional class struggle demand: GET THE TROOPS OUT OF LITTLE ROCK!

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If state troops were called out in a regular strike situation, or an unemployed march, or a demonstration for relief, or pensions, or a free speech fight, I am certain there would be no hesitation or confusion. We would demand that the troops be removed.

The same considerations apply in the Negro struggle today. -- What's more, GET THE TROOPS OUT OF LITTLE ROCK is a slogan that could be understood and appreciated by most sections of the labor movement.

However, it is not the purpose of this letter, nor of the proposed amendment, to make a case for the slogan of opposing the use of troops against the masses struggling for equality. That is not necessary, because it is a traditional slogan of every revolutionary movement, and an inherent part of a class struggle line.

The only reason for mentioning the failure of The Militant to raise the demand that state troops be removed from Little Rock is as a concrete example of the disorienting effect of the federal troops slogan, which should be rejected by the party.

Comradely,

/s/ Jean Blake

P.S. I hereby request that this letter be published in an Internal Discussion Bulletin.

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Letter on Troops Slogan

By Sam Marcy

Buffalo, New York
January 21, 1956

Secretariat
Political Committee
National Committee

Dear Comrades:

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.

In his speech on this question (see paper of 10/17/55) Comrade Breitman says:

"What 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 October 17 issue of the paper has a leading editorial entitled "For Federal Intervention!" and the headline on the December 19 issue of the paper is "Why We Say: Send U.S. Troops to Mississippi."

It is thus abundantly clear that we are actually calling upon the Eisenhower administration to dispatch the federal (capitalist) army on a liberating mission to Mississippi. To put it in Breitman's own words: "We propose through federal intervention with troops to advance the civilizing of Mississippi, and assist in changing the hearts of some human beings there. . ." (12/19/55).

The full meaning of the line of the paper on the question is brought out clearly in the lead article of 12/19/55 by John Thayer. It hails the demand of the Pittsburgh Courier for federal troops

"as a leap forward in the campaign for effective action. . . The importance of the demand for federal troops is that it goes to the very heart of the problem. . . the key point in Mississippi is enforcement. . . What is needed is to enforce the civil rights of the Negro people in Mississippi, including the right to vote, to punish swiftly all those who threaten to injure or lynch Negroes.

"Federal troops sent to Mississippi could take over all law enforcement and stay there until Negro rights were fully established. This would undoubtedly result in the election of a large number of Negro sheriffs and mayors in the Delta region where the terror is now the worst, and where the Negro people are in an overwhelming majority."

This is utterly false and completely misleading. There is not a grain of class truth in it. The Morgan-Rockefeller-Dupont government is not going to send federal troops to "punish" its satellite state of Mississippi (with or with-

out 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.

U.S. capitalism, ever since the treacherous Hays Compromise of 1877, has consciously and deliberately built up Mississippi and the rest of the South as a hinterland of reaction, as a reserve against a resurgent labor movement, and as a wedge against the unity of the Negro and white workers. It intends to maintain it that way.

The gang of finance capitalists which imposed a bloody strike on the Southern Bell workers last year is part of the same gang which is desperately trying to break the strike of the Westinghouse workers this year. The gang of corporate thieves who are sponsoring financial schemes for runaway northern plants to the south are the same gang who are financing the White Citizens Councils. Their agents dominate the federal government, and their stooges swarm around Washington like locusts.

Robert T. Stevens, former Secretary of the Army, was a director of General Electric whose plants in the South are outrageously anti-Negro, particularly in Louisville, Kentucky. He is also a director of A.T. & T. (whose subsidiary is strikebreaker, Southern Bell). Finally, he is Chairman of J. P. Stevens & Co., a textile giant deeply involved in the runaway plant policy of the textile industry to the South.

Sinclair Weeks (Secretary of Commerce) is key Director of the First National Bank of Boston, which sponsors financial schemes for the runaway plants to the South, and he is the leading light in the Eisenhower administration responsible for maintaining the Dixiecrat-Republican coalition.

These are the things we should tell the workers about the capitalist army and its top brass, and not about the imaginary liberating mission it will embark on "if the workers put pressure on 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

workers

toward the substitution of the capitalist army by a people's militia or/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. What has happened in our paper is that we have converted a rhetorical formulation of the question into an affirmative political program.

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 Willemuth, 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.

Allusion is made by Breitman to the period of Reconstruction. "We say federal intervention with troops will be necessary, just as they were needed in the days of Reconstruction." Later on, in his second installment, referring to Reconstruction, he says, "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." True! But that was before capitalism was transformed into imperialism. Imperialism, the rule of finance capital means the rule of political reaction and violence -- not freedom.

But even in Reconstruction days, the capitalist army was only relatively progressive. As soon as the Negro masses raised the slogan of "40 acres and a mule" and began to carry it out Northern troops were sent against them! If the Northern troops, in the period of capitalism's ascent could not reconstruct Mississippi according to democratic lines, how can the capitalist army do it in the period of its decline? There are not a few Negro intellectuals who think that the period of Reconstruction can be repeated, or improved upon by the capitalist government. Rather than add vigour to these illusions, we should bring class truth and enlighten them on the difference between the role of the capitalist government in the period of Reconstruction, and the period of imperialist domination. (To "reform" or "reconstruct" Mississippi implies the reform or reconstruction of the federal capitalist government itself, does it not?)

What is the significance of Breitman's reference to the role of the Northern army during the period of Reconstruction? Obviously Comrade Breitman wants to demonstrate that since the capitalist army played a relatively progressive role at that time, then, ipso facto, it could play a progressive role today. Otherwise, why bring it up? A workers' leader, especially a Marxist, who is discussing strategy and tactics for today's struggles, should, when it is helpful, bring out the relatively progressive and inconsistent role that our enemy class played in the past, only in order to show how completely reactionary it is today. But much more important from the point of view of tactics and strategy is to show the thoroughly progressive and revolutionary role of the Negro masses. He should show how they passed from the "Great General Strike" (stoppage of work on the plantations) to insurrection and to the organization of independent "rifle clubs" and "militia." Is this lesson not more pertinent today, at a time of mounting violence -- the violence of finance capital -- against the Negro masses? Is it not more important to seize on the example of "rifle clubs" and "militia" as a stirring example of the independent initiative of the masses to be emulated today in the South as well as in the North, particularly in large unions with huge funds and material resources.

A whole new generation of Negro youth are showing renewed interest in Negro history, as witness the growth of various Negro history clubs throughout the country. Petit bourgeois Negro reformers and particularly Stalinists, will seek to confuse them with bourgeois and petit bourgeois interpretations and hide the profound class significance and revolutionary role of the Negro masses in American history. Shall we not seize the opportunity to infuse them with our approach to the Negro question, which is certainly the only road to the solution of the Negro problem today?

The issue raised by the federal troops slogan is merely a new version of a much older one which reaches back to the dawn of the labor movement, and goes under the heading of "the standing (capitalist) army versus the people's militia." It can only be properly understood in the light of the century-old struggle of the world-wide working class, as generalized in Marx's theory of the state, and as it was enriched and elaborated by Lenin in his popular work State and Revolution.

More than three-quarters of a century have elapsed since the Gotha program. In it for the first time, a working class party under the influence of Marx and Engels included in its demands a "people's militia" in place of a standing (capitalist) army. This marked a turning point in the attitude of the German Workers Party towards the capitalist state, at least on paper. It was due to the direct influence of Marx's teaching on the character of the state, and the fresh lessons of the Paris Commune which he analyzed in his book The Civil War in France.

"The first decree of the Commune," says Marx, "was the suppression of the standing army and the substitution for it of the armed people."

"This demand," said Lenin, commenting on the decree, "now figures in the program of any party claiming the name Socialist." It figures in our program.

It is sometimes assumed that Trotsky's slogan of "Workers Defense Guards" was an entirely new slogan. Actually it was merely a popular adaptation to modern conditions of the slogan for a people's militia. In fact, "Substitution for the standing army of a people's militia, indissolubly linked up with factories, mines, farms, etc." is an integral part of the Transitional Program (see The Death Agency of Capitalism, Page 32).

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 lead article by Thayer, quoted earlier states that:

"The importance of federal troops is that it goes to the very heart of the problem. Other proposals -- praiseworthy in themselves -- made by Negro and labor leaders -- missed the heart of the question which was: How can something effective be done to stop the Mississippi terror?"

A worse formulation of the question is scarcely conceivable! Is it really true that the "heart of the problem" of Negro liberation from white supremacist terror lies with the capitalist army?

On the contrary! 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 analagous 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, p. 12. IT)

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 did not only not disarm the fascists, but conspired with them and fraternized with them in the end.

"A march of one million people demanding action could not be ignored," says Thayer in his lead article. Of course not! But one million people marching on Washington would also need defense guards to protect themselves against the very capitalist army upon which they are calling to defend the Negro people in Mississippi. Shall we forget the lesson of the Veteran's Bonus March on Washington in 1932? Or is Eisenhower supposed to be more kindly to the Negro people than Hoover and MacArthur were to the veterans. Mass action under a correct slogan is one thing. It can turn into a disaster with a false demand.

This is not to say that in certain isolated cases the capitalist apparatus will not occasionally intervene "in the interest of maintaining law and order," just as in many cases during the People's Front era, the regular police and militia subdued isolated fascist outbreaks of violence. These exceptions only obscure but do not nullify the role of the capitalist army and police in relation to the workers and oppressed minorities.

But isn't a slogan such as "Complete Abolition of Secret Diplomacy" analagous to the Federal Troops slogan, since it apparently demands of the state what it cannot give up? No, because here again is involved a "revolutionary invasion" of the "rights" of the capitalist government to make secret treaties and the like, and the transfer of these rights to the workers, as is made apparent by its complementary demand of all treaties and agreements to be made accessible to all workers and farmers. All other demands in the Transitional Program such as Expropriate the sixty families, or Nationalize industry under workers control are revolutionary invasions of the right of capitalist private property.

"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 monstrousness 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, "by-products 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 judge, politicians, and militiaman.

The Supreme Court decision on anti-segregation 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 the first installment of his speech, Breitman said:

"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 or protecting these rights. That's what has to be done in this situation -- and nothing less will do the job."

It is, of course, perfectly desirable to speak in plain elementary language in an attempt to reach the widest strata of workers. Unfortunately, in his endeavor to do so, Comrade Breitman has unconsciously slipped from Marxism into the cliches of militant bourgeois liberalism. When the New Republic and Nation accuse the Eisenhower administration of "evading" and "dodging" its responsibility to the "country" and to the "people," it's quite understandable. But a Marxist knows that the government is merely the executive committee of the ruling class, and its responsibilities are strictly to that class alone. His job is to show that. Insofar as that goes, far from evading or dodging its duties (to the ruling class) the Eisenhower administration is carrying them out all too splendidly, as witness the Tideland's oil robbery, the atomic energy scandal, and the excess profits tax giveaway.

Instead of merely saying that the government should "quit dodging its responsibilities" he should have added that the government has shown by word and deed that it has no responsibilities whatever to the oppressed minorities and the working class, and merely makes a pretense that it has, in order to deceive and dupe them. That is the difference between liberalism and Marxism.

I would ordinarily be inclined to regard the above as an accidental, isolated error, unworthy of mention. But taken in connection with Thayer's lead article, it takes on a certain significance as the following shows. Thayer says,

"At the AFL-CIO merger convention, Emil Mazey, Secretary-Treasurer of the United Automobile Workers, speaking on the civil rights resolution urged a federal 'trusteeship' over Mississippi 'until the Bill of Rights, the rights of all citizens of that state, are assured and guaranteed.' This is a hopeful indication. . ."

As a matter of fact, Mississippi is already a virtual trusteeship, understanding by that 14-carat word, a colony of the Wall Street government. A dozen banks (closely connected with a half dozen Northern super-banks) support a coterie of not more than 200 big planters and industrialists. These parasites in turn hold in tow two million Negro and white working people on farm and plantation -- oil field and industry. Is this not a "colony" already?

(Now if Mazey instead of his capitalist trusteeship, had proposed a labor "trusteeship," administered by the unions, that, of course, would be different but the only kind of administrators he ever proposes is over rebellious auto locals.)

To hail this dastardly pronouncement of Emil Mazey as "a hopeful indication" is to lose sight of class reality. Here is a case where Breitman should have attacked Mazey for "dodging" and "evading" his responsibilities to the workers, Negro and white. He should have attacked Mazey, who as representative of a million auto workers (if not 15 million organized workers) has responsibilities to his class by virtue of his position as a representative of labor. It is he who is dodging, in the most shameless manner, his responsibilities to the workers and the Negro masses. What Mazey did was merely to "pass the buck" of the responsibility put upon him by his class, and shift it to another class, the very class that is responsible for the terror in Mississippi! And in this, Thayer sees a "hopeful sign."

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.

Fraternally,

/s/ Sam Marcy

Stenogram of Political Committee Discussion on Federal Troops Slogan

(February 9, 1956)

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 transitional 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 unmasks 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 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. 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 edit 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 edit 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.

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 on page 9 of 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 run-around 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 principle 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, Coyocan, D.F., May 22, 1938. Printed in N.I., July 1938.)

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.

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 discussions 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 can 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? Moreover, 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.

Copeland: I did not vote against the motion of November 1, 1955, which I see now by the minutes specifically included the federal troops slogan. But I spoke vigorously against the idea of troops to Mississippi, I think of the slogan particularly as an action slogan rather than a rhetorical question. And I want to speak against it again.

I think to begin with, there is a lot of confusion basically about the transitional program. The comrades are making an unconscious sleight of hand to transfer back and forth the concepts of bourgeois and transitional demands. Hansen makes a differentiation between the two, not in the sense he raised later but in the following sense: At the top of bourgeois society, as it were, he says, we raise the demand for a sliding scale of wages and at the bottom of bourgeois society in some other

situation where you don't have full bourgeois conditions you raise the demand for an 8-hour day. But in the sense we are talking about, to differentiate between bourgeois and transitional, there is no sense. A transitional demand is almost impossible to be realized in the framework of capitalism, but only through the framework of the revolutionary struggle. The so-called bourgeois demands that we raise also involve a struggle. It is formalistic to make a differentiation between the bourgeois and the transitional in regard to their being permissible, etc. But the important point here is not whether the slogan is either "transitional" or "bourgeois," but whether this particular slogan is in fact permissible.

Stein also tried to make a difference between these two slogans, saying the U.S. troops to the South was not a transitional demand. But he added it will not be resolved within the framework of capitalism. This is generally the description of precisely a transitional demand. But I don't want to argue on this point of whether or not it is a transitional demand but whether it is a correct demand for us to make at all.

Stein raised some interesting questions. He said there is a possibility of armies doing something progressive. That is true. If Daladier called on the army to fight down the fascists the workers would not oppose the army. But what did Trotsky add? That the workers would fight alongside the army with their own principles and weapons of struggle. Presenting the question this way blurs over our basic attitude on the army. It is all very well not to be a sectarian, but it is also necessary to take a clear position and not mislead the workers. It is also okay to call a cop in relation to 20 people but in relation to one million, I think it would be wrong.

To make another point of how really the comrades are wrestling with the idea of some kind of transitional demand: Hansen points out that if the army went to Mississippi they could arrest the governor. That is correct, but it would be more correctly addressed to the workers. The army in refusing to do it would leave it to the workers. How can the workers do it under the shadow of the bourgeois army? The question is how to organize the kind of armies necessary to arrest the governor. The mass thinking should be to build up toward that period when the workers arrest the governor.

Stein said he never heard such sharp demarcation between the army and the other departments of the bourgeois state. I think State and Revolution is very clear on just this point. The differentiation Lenin makes, I think, is with the parliament and the whole bourgeois bureaucracy -- that these are secondary to the armed power and that this armed power of the bourgeoisie is the very essence of the state, and it is used always in the interests of the bourgeoisie in spite of the fact that it can on occasion obliquely give help to the working class.

Some of the comrades blur over the question of putting the federal government on the spot, which is the rhetorical side of the question, with the question of making a demand on the government as though it was a transitional demand. The point Stein made about the Europeans asking the American soldiers why they don't protect the Negroes of Mississippi is part of putting the government on the spot, which is a good thing to say. Workers in the plant said to the right-wing red baiters, if you want to fight the communists why not go to Korea and do it? We would not say such a thing. But on that particular level, it was a good rhetorical question. And it shut the cowardly red baiters up.

I would like to say this also about the slogan, that it should not be misinterpreted. It must be crystal clear. It is all right for us to say we know what we are for. But a slogan must be crystal clear as to what you are asking for. The idea of

asking for something is to ask for something good. If you are asking for troops to Mississippi and have in mind what a workers' government would do and you are trying to gear this whole thing in with that kind of approach, you are confusing the issue, and it is not worth making that point because it is far outweighed by the danger of creating illusions that you can depend on the capitalist army.

I was very struck the night of the first discussion on November 1 by Breitman's joke. Breitman told a story about the old Negro in a meeting where the comrades were talking about sending troops to the South. The old Negro said well to just send a few people down there and take care of Milam and Bryant and then the government would send troops all right. Everybody laughed. Why the laugh? Maybe the comrades felt the truth of the joke. And the point of the joke was that the army would be used not against the Milams and Bryants, but against their victims. I could not understand why everybody laughed because it seemed to prove the opposite of what most of the comrades saw in the slogan.

I think it is a principled issue, the question of raising it in this vein. And again I think comrades are just confusing themselves to bring up all these arguments against ultra-leftism, sectarianism, etc. You are dealing with the army, the power of state, and the supposition that the army might do some good if it went, and this is beside the point where sectarianism is concerned.

When we say depend on your own strength, we don't ask in cases where there are big strike violences -- we don't ask the government to send in the army. They send in the army quick enough. At Alabama State University they are talking about sending in the National Guard. If they send the National Guard now, I presume they will restore law and order and Miss Lucy will return to college. But I wouldn't ask the National Guard of Alabama to restore order. This would not occur to me. It is something new. I think the comrades themselves because they make a differentiation between North and South would not call for the Alabama National Guard but on the federal troops. Regardless of the fact that the National Guard might do something progressive, we should not sow illusions that it is to be depended upon.

This question of there being a little difference between the North and the South, that is absolutely true, and if a war would require us to defend bourgeois democracy against fascism, of course we would fight arms in hand to defend democracy against the fascists. But we would fight independently. The workers would fight independently. We would have arms in the hands of the workers independently. We would call for material support from the workers. This is ABC.

I don't see how it applies here. But this is just the question in another way -- it is precisely in these fights where we fight for something relatively progressive against a reactionary thing, but we don't give an ounce of faith to the bourgeois army. It is in these fights that we always call upon the workers to create their own armed bodies. This is so in any struggle. This is even more true of the Negro people as a body.

It would be letting the working people down to advance the slogan as a slogan of action -- calling upon the capitalist army. When Hansen brings up the question of bourgeois demands in general, this has nothing to do with it. I would like to make a motion.

Motion by Copeland: That we withdraw this slogan as an action demand -- immediate federal intervention in the South.

General agreement that action on motion by Copeland be held over pending further discussion.

Motion by Hansen: That we make the transcript of this discussion as well as documents, etc. available to students.

Carried.

Motion: That discussion on troops slogan be continued at special meeting next Monday.

Carried.

Stenogram of Political Committee Discussion on Federal Troops Slogan

(February 13, 1956)

Wood: I suppose this discussion is over whether this is a principled question or not. I won't take up the time of the committee with an argument that has been effectively answered. In other words, I don't believe we are dealing here with a principled question. It is merely a question of tactics.

From the point of view of tactics I think there is something to be said for Marcy's point. I think we are inclined to think that the slogan we have hit upon, which I thought was a very good slogan and which was taken up by others among the Negro masses, is an all-inclusive one -- however, I don't believe that this slogan is a very effective slogan as far as the Southern Negro is concerned. I feel it is a good slogan here in the North and that it might help us out in the election campaign, although even there I don't picture it quite as rosy as Stein did. I think we could use it effectively, but we ought to at all times in the paper and even when we discuss it, tie it up with a slogan for the formation of some action group down South to make this slogan more effective.

We should say well if the troops aren't going in, somebody has to take care of law and order. We have an opportunity here, even more than in Minneapolis and other places where we tried to use the slogan of defense guards, of rallying around us a group of citizens who believe in law and order. We are out to uphold law and order. And as every occasion arises in the South, we ought in addition to calling upon the troops to go in, find ways and means to get over to the Southern Negro how he can help himself.

In the Lucy case we have the right to call upon a certain segment of the student body to get together and prevent riotings on the part of a fascist group, whether from the outside or inside. As a matter of fact, I think that if we had two or three comrades in that university it would not have been too difficult to get up a group that would have caused the other side a certain amount of difficulty. In other words, we are out to split up the white groups wherever possible and try to build up a white group that will be willing to go out and struggle against the other white group headed by Eastland who is now trying to organize very reactionary groups down South.

I think that something could be organized down there to put up some kind of battle. It would not be too difficult. If it is difficult in one place it may prove easy next time in another. We have to try to get this idea over to some whites who are against this lynch spirit emanating from the White Citizens group. We ought to get over the point that somebody has to get up and fight these groups. Even from the point of view of heading off fascist America it is necessary to fight against such groups. That is the only way fascist mobs of this kind can be stopped. We have learned this lesson from Hitler and others. Even if there is no possibility of forming such a group, we should get the idea over that in the last analysis this is the only way this type of reaction can be stopped -- by the formation of some kind of defense group.

It is interesting to note that the Negroes in Montgomery have taken, according to the capitalist press, to arming themselves with shotguns, as a precautionary measure. To some extent the rank and file is far ahead of any slogans that have been

called forth here by any group. We mention it on occasion, but only on special occasions.

I think that as a well-rounded program, certainly down South, we should place it at the head of the list -- the formation of defense groups wherever possible and as each particular case arises we have to call to the attention of the union movement and others what is necessary to be done.

In the Lucy case, it was noted that the university accused the rubber workers especially of being among those most responsible for the riot. I understand this was denied by the rubber union and by the CIO. But we should point out to them that it is not only necessary to deny that but that it wouldn't hurt to have the CIO come out at the head of such groups to defend law and order,

It is no secret anymore that the anti-Negro council is also the anti-labor council. That should be known to the labor movement.

I realize the difficulties in the formation of such groups. I am not setting forth as an action slogan. Even calling out the troops isn't an action slogan; it is a propaganda slogan. As a propaganda slogan we ought to begin sowing seeds now wherever possible and have the union movement and whatever groups we can get hold of on the campuses or anywhere else who are willing to fight against these White Council groups, to have them organized and in that way we can feel we are doing something in the struggle for Negro rights down South.

I think in the last analysis this battle is going to be fought down South and it is for that reason that we have to start the ball rolling and at least from a propaganda point of view try to get those forces down South who are ready to put up some resistance to the White Council groups to form groups of their own, to form some type of organization if possible.

As far as the Negro elements are concerned, they have on their own in some cases formed some defense guards, to some extent even around the Lucy case -- somebody to drive the car and protect Lucy, her friends. This is also true, to a limited extent in the bus boycott going on in Montgomery. It is also true in other cases in the South.

What we have to do is not leave it entirely to the Negro masses, but try to bring it also to the attention of the white union movement, whatever there is down there, of how important it is to fight against these White Council groups. We have the whole anti-Hitler tradition which applies to the situation as it is developing now in the South. The Southern racists are not relying entirely on the sheriff's law-and-order boys; they are relying on an extra-legal group formed into the White Councils.

I think we are treating this Negro question here a little one-sidedly. We are trying to figure out how best to help the party in the campaign. Frankly, I haven't got as much confidence in scoring debating points as some of the other comrades. We could make a point here and there on it, but sooner or later the reformists will take over that slogan and we will have to go on to the next step. I think we ought to always have in mind, in addition to utilizing such a slogan, to get down to fundamentals, that is how best to propagandize for the formation of action groups among whites and Negroes down South, to help split off any tiny segment of a White group, even on the most reactionary basis -- even if we can form a small

group that stands for law and order in the universities and is willing to fight against the hoodlums who try to molest the Negroes. That would be a big victory for us.

About 90%, it is reported in the press, are opposed to what these White Councils groups are trying to do. They say we are all against having Miss Lucy admitted, but we don't like this kind of stuff. If we can get a certain group willing to get out and protect her or at least if we propagandize for the formation of that type of group we will be doing more in my opinion than merely trying to reap some benefit from any such slogans that have been raised.

I don't see any principled objection to the slogan raised. I think the comrades on the paper have used it effectively. My only objection is that as a slogan in the last analysis it does not solve our problems and does not solve the problems of the colored workers and white workers down South. I realize we have to advocate -- in the last analysis we have to say that what is needed is to unionize the South. We should not be so taken away with this slogan of sending troops as to give the impression that it is the end-all here of the Negro struggle. I think that we can very well utilize time and time again in the paper consistent propaganda as every case arises for the formation wherever possible of certain defense groups and I think that Marcy advocates that.

If this discussion merely showed Marcy's position is unprincipled, then I think outside of one or two comrades we are pretty well agreed. But I think we have to go further and try to see to it that we do more than we have been doing to foster the idea of the possibility and the availability of setting up certain forces in the South that will enter into the struggle against these White Councils now being formed.

Ring: The slogan of defense guards and slogan of federal troops are both propaganda slogans for us right now. That is the situation we are in. From a tactical viewpoint it is a question of determining which of these two propaganda slogans is the most effective, which does the job we are trying to do. And there certainly is no conflict between the two slogans. In fact, I think that the slogan of defense guards in this case will develop out of the federal troops slogan. Marcy does not put it that way. He counterposes the slogan of defense guards to the slogan of federal troops and proposes that we withdraw the one and put forward the other in its place. He does this on the basis of principle.

I think we ought to get that part of it cleared up and then we can discuss the purely tactical problem Wood raises.

For my part I want to say that the exposition put forward by Marcy in his letter and the arguments of Copeland here in the committee I can only characterize as completely sectarian in its entire approach. First of all the argument that to demand the use of federal troops is to give support to a reactionary capitalist institution. If we were to follow that logically and carry it to its conclusion, we would wind up with the SLP.

The Negro people carried their struggle for school integration into the Supreme Court and we supported that struggle. We continuously pointed out that their legal action would have been strengthened if it was supported by mass action, but the fact was that it was the reactionary capitalist court. That did not prevent us from supporting the Negro people in their fight to get a favorable decision from it.

The second argument Marcy raises is that in raising the slogan of federal troops we confuse and blunt the consciousness of the Negro people. If we take the problem from the point of the Supreme Court decision and examine it as it has expressed itself in the political struggle, and not simply on the basis of abstract principle, we will find that the opposite is the case. This is the only way we can estimate slogans of this kind.

You will recall that when Lavan gave the report on the NAACP convention he proposed we shift our emphasis in relation to the Supreme Court decision. This was generally agreed to. At the time the court decision was handed down, we attacked it sharply and correctly on the gradualist concept. Lavan pointed out that the delegates didn't understand the point we were making. While recognizing the limitations of the decision they felt it necessary to concentrate on pushing for its implementation. They couldn't understand our emphasis on the "gradualist" aspect of the decision. We had to shift our emphasis in relation to that question -- stop hammering on the basic meaning of the decision and what it would mean in the showdown. That wasn't very long ago.

I don't think we have the same problem today in relation to the conscious Negro that we had then. I think the whole development in Mississippi and more particularly the reaction of the northern capitalist politicians to it have given the more conscious Negroes a real education on the meaning of the decision of the Supreme Court on "gradualism." I think they understand today that the only way integration will be accomplished is if there is a force to back it up. The court decision favoring desegregation isn't going to get them anywhere by itself.

I don't think it is any longer a question of whether we have a good campaign slogan. You can debate with Wood how much value it will have for us in the course of the campaign, but I think it is passed that stage now. This is no longer our slogan. The slogan has been put forward by the Pittsburgh Courier, by Abner Willoughby in Chicago, by Emil Mazey, A. Philip Randolph and Mike Quill. More than that, every major capitalist politician has now taken a stand on it. They have not simply used some evasive formulas for ducking it. It has forced everyone to blurt out his real position on the South. Beginning with Eisenhower, then Stevenson, followed by Truman who comes out against it recalling how terrible the reconstruction period was. Then Kefauver rushes into print to insist that he has no basic disagreement with Stevenson. Harriman just took his stand today in favor of federal intervention, but if you read the text suddenly he says nobody has raised the question of sending federal troops but he is against it. He explains why he is against it. Every single one of them has been compelled to take a stand.

If ever a slogan in a brief period of time has served to advance the consciousness and understanding of the Negro people it is this one. It is a phenomenal example of what a correct demand can do. The fact it has developed the way it has demonstrates that to be the case. Aside from what slogans we decide to put forward in the course of the campaign, along with every other candidate, our candidates will have to take their stand on whether we are for or against sending federal troops to Mississippi.

I don't think we have a problem of the reformists taking over the slogan in the way we develop it. In every case we have linked it completely with the idea of the mass movement of Negro people putting heat on the federal government to compel them to take this action. We have linked it with a march on Washington and unionization of the South. We have a complete line of demarcation.

On the slogan of defense guards I think the way Marcy raises it is completely sectarian. It is unquestionably a superior slogan to the slogan of federal troops, but "all power to the Soviets" is an even better slogan than defense guards. The question is does it apply now? Marcy doesn't deal with this at all.

As far as Wood's proposal on it, it must be considered in relation to each given situation. In Montgomery where the people are organized and appear to be completely armed, I think if we had people in that movement they could begin to consider the proposition of discussing with some people the organized formation of defense guards. But in the State of Mississippi where the Negro people are largely unorganized, I don't see how the slogan has immediate concrete understandable meaning for them. We have to approach the problem on the basis of the given state of consciousness and to the state of the Negro's own organization. The situation is developing in Montgomery and other places where the defense guard slogan might be considered and I agree that we have to watch for every opportunity to push the idea.

Roberts: I agree with Ring that Marcy has a sectarian approach to this question. I think Marcy wants to jump over or is not mindful of an important transitional step that the Negro struggle has to pass through before it will arrive at a full-blown revolutionary development -- namely, a political stage within the framework of the bourgeois democratic institutions.

I would like to ask Copeland a question. Do you propose that the Negro people and we as a revolutionary party advancing the struggle -- address ourselves at all to the federal government in any other manner than to confront it immediately as the executive committee of the ruling class, whose existence we are trying to end? If you are going to turn at all to the federal government, then you are going to have to shape demands the Negro people can make on the federal government and on the parties that are now in power. That is how we came to raise the slogan in the first place. At the time of the Till demonstrations last fall, we at first raised the political slogan of a labor party. We stressed the urgency of the labor party slogan. Breitman criticized this as being too remote as far as the immediate developments were concerned. A few intermediary steps were missing. Furthermore, we were not explaining what a working class party or a labor government would do. The slogan, "Build a labor party!" did not give concrete political direction to the demonstrations breaking out throughout the Negro communities, nor could the slogan serve as the means of generalizing the local demonstrations into a rallying slogan for a March-on-Washington.

Assume you have a March-on-Washington movement develop from the northern and from the southern states. What is the march for? What would the Negroes go to Washington for? Aren't they going there in order to put demands and pressure upon the government to do certain things? By placing their demands they expose and put the government functionaries on the spot. Thereby they develop further their understanding of the whole process and mechanism of class government. If you take the position that it is impermissible to make demands of the capitalist state, then you will have a giant protest demonstration without focus. That really would play into the hands of the bourgeoisie, sow illusions and give confidence to the government. All the administration would then need to do is come before the demonstration, arrange with the leaders of the demonstration about some vague promises for action -- and you have no way of exposing or putting them on the spot.

We have to envisage a movement of Negro people running ahead of a resurgence of the labor movement, and for that reason we cannot simply tell the Negroes to go to the labor movement and tell it to build a new party. If there is a movement developing in the Negro community which is starting to intervene and putting pressure and wants action, you have to shape demands for it that it can address to the federal government whose constitution says, according to articles 13, 14 and 15, that Negroes are entitled and have the same rights as other citizens. By making a principle of the federal troops questions you are jumping over a whole stage of the development of the Negro struggle. It is an important transitional stage in development of Negro consciousness.

It is wrong to counterpose the one slogan to other slogans, including the slogan of defense guards. If we have been slow in developing that side of it, it isn't because we thought the federal troops slogan some kind of talisman and slogan that could cover everything. It was because we didn't want to raise the slogan of defense guards abstractly. We want to watch what is going on in the South and seize upon concrete developments taking place there. We want to first treat the defense guard idea in reportage form rather than to put it in as advice from afar to the Negroes in the South.

It was at no time our conception that the federal troops slogan was enough, and that we preferred that slogan to the slogan of defense guards. That wasn't at all involved. In fact, if we see Negroes in motion defending themselves against hoodlum terror, we don't want to raise the troops slogan in connection with that so as not to take away from the action of the masses themselves. That would be true in Montgomery. But even if there are a number of individual instances where the Negroes are proceeding alone and defending themselves, that doesn't negate and take away from the fact that you must have generalized, political slogans in which the whole Negro community throughout the entire country can transcend and bridge its demands from city to city, and present an over-all political program which it addresses to the federal government. It becomes a program which the Negro movement also asks the labor movement to adopt and one we incorporate as part of our propaganda for a workers and farmers government. The federal troops is one of those slogans and one of the demands of the entire Negro population. In short, we need both "direct action" and "political action" slogans. The federal troops call is a "political action" slogan.

The federal troops slogan does not need to be a static thing. We can develop it. We can branch out with the slogan. Beginning with raising it, we can later discuss what kind of troops. How shall they be selected to go South? We might demand a special enlistment by means of which Negroes will be free to volunteer for the specific purpose of going South. Then in Mississippi a question of opening the federal army to Negroes so that they can receive military instruction and act as a kind of defense guard under federal auspices. We can develop the slogan on that basis. In short, we don't have to stay forever with the slogan as we now present it. But we do have to begin by raising the slogan because it expresses the demand of the Negro people for the federal government to come to the aid of a minority whose constitutional rights are scandalously violated.

Sharon: At the time the slogan was first proposed, I took objection to it on the grounds which are still valid today, even more so. I recall arguing with Breitman and one of the big points he made in favor of the slogan was the particular condition of the Southern Negro, his being atomized, dispersed on plantations, overwhelmed by the superiority of organized power so that he was in a helpless state and only a slogan of this kind provided a key, a reasonable answer that could be picked up by the Negro movement both in the South and North.

I said at the time I believed that the situation as it was developing was one of war and that the Negro movement would find a way to arm itself and engage in defense of its objectives. I think developments in Montgomery have been a confirmation of that. The Negroes of the South will find weapons of defense. Here, close examination of the Montgomery is necessary and revealing. The elementary nature of demands supported by the entire Negro community are such that no Negro could fail to join in. They serve to spur mass mobilization. I believe that the slogan of "Federal troops..." has a major disability although I want to make clear I don't stand on the same ground as other comrades who attack it as a principled violation. I think the slogan could be used and might be used in a limited and restricted way.

I start from the premise that we are trying to provide a slogan that would be a guide to the next step to the Negro movement in the South. We are not primarily concerned with raising slogans that will appeal to the organized Negro in the North and NAACP, important as that is. I believe that the movement in the South bears our first responsibility. Any slogan which tends to shift the responsibility of elementary defense of Negro rights in the South to some government agency -- goes in the wrong direction at this time. It plays into the hands of the Negro petty-bourgeois leader who is terrified at the events unfolding and wants to solve all problems of the Negro movement through any agency other than the strength and mobilization of their own movement.

It has limited value when used in exposing Stevenson, Kefauver, Harriman. It is made to order for this purpose. It puts them on the spot. No one can object. But to seriously make this slogan as the key to the answer in the South, is a mistake. I would prefer for ourselves that we understand the struggle as it really is in the South, as going on today in the Montgomery business and elsewhere.

What is indicated there are slogans which reinforce the Negro's confidence in himself, and in his movement and in alliance with others ready to help him. If we brought a slogan like this into a genuine mass movement beginning to develop, we would be serving to derail that movement. What is needed there is reinforcement of this very important development, the first of its kind in many, many decades. The Negro in the South is organizing himself into a genuine movement.

Comrades are mistaken who attack the slogan on principled grounds. We can only ask one thing of a slogan. Does it serve to raise the level of consciousness of the movement itself? Does it serve to draw into the struggle greater masses of Negro people? Does it serve to increase weapons and forces which they must mobilize to win their aspirations? If the slogan meets that test then it is for us. This slogan has too many disadvantages and in any case it is, I believe, being passed up by the developing events in the real movement taking place in the South.

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 nation-wide 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 terrorist.

Our slogans are inter-related. 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.

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 counter-position 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 of the localities, what choice is there left to the Negro people and workers in the South except to defend themselves?

Lavan: 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 than 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 seed-bed 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. That is in the main the question here.

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 passers-by 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 politician, 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 sending 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 about Mississippi. They 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 measures 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 like to say in conclusion that this slogan has served to discredit the form of the Negro movement already. 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.

Copeland: The more I have thought over the remarks of the comrades last Thursday and some of the remarks tonight, the more I am astounded at them.

Last week, Stein read to us from an article which Trotsky entitled, "Learn to Think." The point of the article is that the proletarian leadership does not plan its tactics by conducting itself at all times directly opposite to the way the bourgeoisie conducts itself. I might turn this argument directly against Stein and the others who use it by showing that they are committing the very same error that Trotsky was warning against -- although not in an ultra-leftist way. Merely because the bourgeoisie at this time opposes sending its own Jim Crow army to the South, they imply, we should demand it. That seems to be the general feeling of those comrades who point to Stevenson's refusal to send troops, and feel we should, so to speak, automatically counterpose this by sending troops.

But there is an even more important thing involved here. In a discussion of this type -- a discussion about the propriety of a workers' leadership calling upon the Wall Street army to perform a progressive task -- it is wrong to bring in the example that Trotsky gives in the "Learn to Think" article. Trotsky gives the example of the capitalist government being forced by its own contradictions, on some occasion to utilize the army progressively, though incidentally, while maintaining capitalist interests. Trotsky gives the example of the army possibly disarming fascists. The implication Stein made by analogy is that we would call upon the bourgeois army to disarm the fascists, and raise this as a general slogan. That is absolutely impermissible. And I hope Stein will clarify his position on this point.

Furthermore, it is inexcusable to blur over the difference between the rhetorical question aspect of the thing, the expository aspect, that is what a workers and farmers government would do, and the action demand -- immediate intervention with Wall Street's Jim Crow army.

It is equally wrong to approach the question from the barren, formal point of view -- of whether this slogan is a "bourgeois slogan" or a "transitional slogan." This is not the point at all. All slogans that do not transcend the framework of bourgeois society are in a sense bourgeois, that is, capitalist. But some slogans are pro-capitalist, while our idea is to be anti-capitalist. All of our slogans, whether we label them transitional or bourgeois, are class struggle slogans. All our slogans are pivoted around the struggle, whether that struggle be in the form of a strike, or its anticipatory form of a negotiation -- whether that struggle be of a short-lived demonstration, or an actual revolution -- and whether the struggle ever actually takes place or not.

Last week I attempted to say a few things about the nature of a transitional slogan. The comrades at that time said that the troops to the South slogan was not a transitional slogan. Then they defended the slogan as though it were a transitional slogan. This is very poor logic. And it is not the point anyway. The Transitional Program, by the way, is not transitional because the slogans are half-way between capitalism and socialism, as Hansen said last week. It is transitional because by and large the struggle for these so-called demands leads to a revolutionary struggle.

But if neither my point nor Marcy's point is simply to call the slogan of troops to the South a bourgeois slogan, how is it any kind of an argument for the comrades to explain that it is a bourgeois slogan? Since we are for some "bourgeois slogans," such as freedom and equality for the Negro people, do we therefore have to be for the slogan, U.S. troops to the South, merely because it is bourgeois? That is a wrong method of argumentation. The comrades are merely shifting the arguments to another field; namely, whether it is right to use bourgeois slogans or not. And that is not the question at all.

I regard the slogan as an error in principle. It fails to advance the class struggle even by implication. It blurs over and paints up the reactionary character of the U.S. army which is a Jim Crow army as far as its officer caste is concerned, and the officer caste is the soul of a ruling class army. Whatever the slogan gains in putting the government on the spot is far outweighed by the illusions it sows among the Negro workers about the nature of the armed forces of Wall Street. And when comrades complain in this connection that they don't see the reason for a sharp distinction between the army and the other departments of government, this point requires a very special emphasis.

Lenin explained that "the state is a special organization of force; it is the organization of violence for the suppression of some class."

The army is the reactionary essence of the capitalist state. The army is most specifically this organization of violence for the suppression of some class, namely, the working class and its Negro allies. The Congress and elective offices, on the other hand, are subdivisions of the state that we do address ourselves to, not because they are in opposition to the state itself at this time -- not because they are in opposition to its reactionary essence, the armed forces -- but in order to mobilize the masses for struggle against them. And needless to say, we do not address ourselves to them in order to ask for things that are bad for the masses, things like the intervention of Wall Street's army.

The Congress and the elective posts are not in opposition to the armed forces at this time. But theoretically, they may become so. Theoretically, the bourgeois parliament may be captured by the masses at the polls. That is approximately what we mean by a workers and farmers government -- where the workers have the parliament and elective posts, but the bosses still have the essence of the state, the armed forces.

Even at the present time, however, if the parliament cannot become the complete instrument of the masses, it may be utilized as a sounding board of the class struggle. Our parliamentary slogans are of course the shadowed reflections of class struggle slogans.

We call upon Congress, the present Congress, to repeal the Taft-Hartley law. But repealing the Taft-Hartley law, unlike sending the Wall Street army, is in and of

itself a good thing. Moreover, we all understand that only a mobilization of the workers will compel the Congress to do this.

We were for Congress passing the Wagner Labor Act. But we always saw this as a reflection, as a concomitant, of the class struggle itself. There is nothing wrong with addressing ourselves to the capitalist government for good and desirable things. But the intervention of the U.S. army is in itself a bad thing.

We generally address ourselves to the parliamentary struggle as an integral but subordinate part of our struggle against the capitalist state itself. We are mobilizing the masses even in the parliamentary arena, toward the creation of a new state. In creating this new state, the masses will have to reckon with the old state, whether they have 51% of the parliament or 99% of it. They will especially have to reckon with the state as a "special organization of force."

Now if we consistently call upon just the special organization of force that is most irreconcilably directed against the masses, to fulfill any of the tasks the masses must perform in the course of their reckoning with the old state, then the masses would be ideologically and in this case, physically, disarmed. And we would be responsible, if we were in the actual leadership and a factor in the situation.

That is why we have to make a sharp demarcation between the capitalist army and some of the other departments of the state.

Last week Stein raised the point of a small group of unarmed radical workers calling for police protection against physical annihilation by a bunch of thugs and hoodlums. Then he compared this with calling upon perhaps a quarter of a million bourgeois policemen, Wall Street's army, for the protection of 15 million people who are oppressed by Wall Street. This is a mixup of quality and quantity. And it's a misunderstanding of the present status of the class struggle.

It would be quite probable in the present relation of class forces in New York that the cops would defend us against the hoodlums in a more or less routine way. And even if they did not do so, after being called -- even if they should happen to be individual fascist types, and should join in with the hoodlums against us, even in that today-unlikely event -- it could still be said that we would have betrayed no one, and misled no one.

But when we call upon the millions, not to protect themselves, not even to arm themselves with sticks, but to demand the intervention of the Jim Crow U.S. army -- we are responsible for someone other than ourselves. And if the Negro people have made the slogan their own, as was said here last week, that is no credit to us.

The present state of the class struggle in the South -- and the Negro struggle is an aspect of the class struggle -- is explosive. What will the army do, with its heavy proportion of southern Negro-haters and labor-haters in the officer caste? I was in the army in January 1935 during the Providence Rhode Island textile strike. My regiment was mobilized. The rank and file soldiers had no special opinions for or against the strike. We were given machine gun practice and a rehearsal under tear gas. We were lectured by the officers. "Don't shoot at the mob," they said. "But if you do, don't shoot over their heads. They must respect the U.S. army." The officers were talking about a group of white workers in a period when there was supposed to be some sort of general sympathy for strikers.

But we have a much more recent evidence of the army brass' reactionary attitude in their treatment of their own South Korean allies -- how they Jim Crowed them, wouldn't even permit the South Korean officers into the officers' club, how they sanctioned their own soldiers' brutality to the South Korean masses they were supposed to be helping. This brutality included rape, and the most wanton and frequent murder.

Can you possibly believe that this officer caste could ever really carry out a progressive function to any degree in the South under the conditions of tension they would finally be sent down there to arbitrate? Can you really believe, as Lavan does, that it would be an army of protective occupation, presiding over the elections of Negro mayors and judges? The very fact that you said "It is something not to be realized in the framework of capitalism," indicates that you do not expect this Jim Crow army to play a progressive role -- just as it indicates that you are blurring over the real nature of a transitional demand, even if you don't call it a transitional demand.

If you mean that the slogan, "federal troops to the South," will in the course of a revolutionary struggle, mean not the troops of the present Wall Street government, but the troops of a workers' state then your intentions are good. But is it precisely in the course of the revolutionary struggle to create such a state that the troops of the present state would be used to crush the Negroes and workers -- if possible. And the slogan of "Federal troops to the South" would have helped to confuse the Negro masses, and weaken their struggles. The slogan does not answer the test of a transitional slogan. It does not answer the test of any other kind of class slogan. According to Lenin, any slogan we use should have clarity, and it should not be capable of being misinterpreted.

Of course, I can see there is a kind of first-sight attractiveness to this troops-to-the-South slogan. But try putting it side by side with another slogan. For example: If you are asking 100 billion dollars for a low-cost housing program for the South. You do not expect the capitalist government to grant it. But the 100 billion dollar program is itself very good and necessary. You mobilize millions of people to demand it, to struggle for it, to realize it partially perhaps -- but to go over to a more and more revolutionary struggle to gain it completely.

A formalist will say that you are creating illusions that the government can and will give this hundred billion dollars. But life and the struggle will prove that you are right and the formalist is wrong. But when you ask for Wall Street's army, you are asking for a bad thing in the first place. The intervention of the U.S. army cannot at all be compared with the building of homes for the poor, unless you assume that Wall Street's army will automatically act in a progressive way. And who is against calling upon the capitalist government for something the masses need? The point is they do not need the present Wall Street army. They need a different army.

On the other hand, if you regard the plight of the Negro masses as so helpless that they must have immediate outside protection, and have no other recourse, then you cannot mean to say that you are asking for a future army of workers' state troops.

I share the comrades' anxiety to find an immediate, dramatic and rounded-out solution to the Negro masses' problems. The comrades point to the example of Stevenson's refusal to send the U.S. army, and Stevenson's mealy-mouthed position on "educating" the South. What should our candidate for president say?

Naturally it would be very bad, very sectarian, if our candidate could say nothing at all on this burning question. Suppose a Negro asked our candidate how he would intervene to help the Negro struggle in the South. Our candidate might well answer "I would send not troops but guns. I am a candidate of labor, black and white. I would call upon the whole labor movement of this country to supply arms to the southern Negroes. I would call for the creation of a Negro and labor militia in the South. The only reason the Negroes can be so terrorized in the South, where they are often in the majority, is that the reactionary whites are armed, the Ku Klux Klan is armed, but the Negroes are unarmed."

The demand for arms is a bourgeois demand by the way. The U.S. Constitution guarantees the rights of all citizens to bear arms. But the demand would sloganize what the militant worker Negro and Negro youth are really thinking and consciously or unconsciously striving toward. It is a bourgeois demand. But it is not pro-bourgeois. It is a class struggle demand. And there can be no misinterpretation of what you mean. It emphasizes that the Negro people should depend first of all upon their own strength. It calls upon them to fight back. But you can't apply this logic to the slogan for capitalist troops. Our candidate is for Negro freedom and Negro equality. He must give a program for this freedom and equality. But apart from the final establishment of socialism, he will explain what must be done right now.

The Negro people are already in a struggle. It is the duty of working class leaders to aid that struggle by describing the best methods of struggle. The point here will not be the minimum or maximum concrete gain the Negro people may achieve through the struggle. The point will not be whether the slogans are bourgeois, proletarian or "transitional." The point will be the advancement of their own struggle, the linking of this to the class struggle in general. A slogan of action is potentially an objective force, not merely a rhetorical question.

If we offer the Negro people a slogan of action, it should be a slogan to mobilize themselves around. And it is a complete absurdity for them to mobilize themselves around the mobilization of the U.S. army. If the capitalists are so unwilling to use the army that it will take a million organized Negro and white workers to compel them to do so, then this million can make an army of their own. That is, they can, if they start thinking about it now.

The point was made last week that there was a great difference between northern and southern methods of capitalist rule. And the parallel was even drawn, by implication, with Spain. While there is no irreconcilable conflict between the southern ruling class and the northern ruling class, as there was during the Civil War, while northern capital more or less dominates southern capital today, it is true that there are contradictions between the capitalists themselves. There are some contradictions between the northern capitalists and some of their southern office boys, and some of the diehard landlords who are, incidentally, usually tied up with northern capital. It is absurd to suppose a war between the northern and southern sections of capital that really resembles the fight between the loyalist and fascist sections of the bourgeoisie in Spain. But for the sake of argument, let us suppose that the conflict were really this sharp. Suppose an armed conflict broke out. What should the Negro masses do? Should they join the northern troops? As they did in the Civil War? Of course not. They should organize their own independent working class troops. I am sure we all agree on this. But that is just the point here.

And why? Precisely because the two conflicting armies would be armies of the same class. They would be in a temporary contradiction that must be resolved on the backs of the oppressed class. This was the case in Spain. And this was why the

Trotskyists demanded independent class action, independent class armies, and independent class politics in Spain.

In addition to everything else, the question of the independent class politics of the proletariat is being mixed up, in the discussion, with the tactical question of taking advantage of rifts in the ruling class. It would be absolutely wrong to create the slightest illusion about the so-called progressive wing of the ruling class -- even if it should come into physical conflict with the reactionary wing. And from the tactical point of view, it would be wrong to create the illusion that there would be any possibility of such a serious conflict in the U.S. in the foreseeable future.

Once again, it is not a question of creating illusions in the government's willingness to do a thing, by addressing yourself to the government (the government may at a certain stage prove all too willing to send more troops than you bargain for!). The illusions involved are on the character of the U.S. army and the class meaning of its mobilization for action.

I believe the comrades are barking up the wrong tree insofar as they put the emphasis on tactics and flexibility in relation to the slogan. Flexibility is very necessary. But here we should emphasize the other and opposite aspect of Bolshevism -- that is, granite hardness and a principled position in relation to the armed forces of the capitalist state.

Stein to Copeland: You stick to the proposition you are against the slogan in principle and you propose we withdraw it? But the slogan is there. What should we do in relation to it? Oppose it? To withdraw the slogan is not enough -- you must in addition have a line on it.

Copeland: I think it is wrong. . .

Stein: Should we denounce it? Should we attack it publicly? That should be part of your motion. You withdraw the slogan. Good. But others continue to discuss the slogan. You have to give the party a line as to what to do.

Copeland: Incorporate it in my motion in sense of the remarks I just made.

Stein: You are in favor of raising it rhetorically. Arent' you creating illusions?

Copeland: Raise the slogan rhetorically? A slogan is not something you raise rhetorically. A slogan is meant to call upon the masses for something. A rhetorical question is not a slogan. If you raise a rhetorical question in the course of an article, that is not a slogan. You don't have to have a line on whether the party uses rhetorical questions or not. By the way, do you mean by this that you see the slogan as a rhetorical question? Is that the way you understand the slogan -- as a "rhetorical" slogan? If you see the slogan only as a rhetorical slogan, I could at least forgive you your other remarks.

Stein: When you say why doesn't Eisenhower send troops to the South, then you say Eisenhower doesn't because he is a capitalist. Doesn't this imply that troops to the South would be a good thing? You are denouncing Eisenhower for not doing it.

Copeland: Do you agree that troops to the South are not a good thing? I would forgive you the possibility of 10% feeling that there was something good about it because you had 90% the intention of exposing Eisenhower. But that would not be a slogan. It would be a rhetorical question.

Stein: The Negroes asked a rhetorical question of Stevenson -- would he be in favor of sending troops to the South. He didn't favor that -- and his answer turned out to be a blow against Stevenson.

Copeland: Our candidate would answer the question as a revolutionist and not as a reformist. It is not just a matter of A counterposed to B.

Chester: It seems to me after listening to Copeland and reading Marcy's letter that their main contradiction is that they don't seem to accept the fact that capitalism cannot grant full democratic rights to the Negroes. If they did accept that fact they should feel free to demand that democratic demands be carried out and expect the process of exposition would take the form of education of the masses in demanding these rights. Now Copeland counterposes to this the whole question of giving arms to the Negro masses. Suppose they are not ready for that. Suppose they don't feel they are ready as they indicated in the Mississippi situation. They rejected it as being impractical at this time.

The point is, if you consider that these are democratic tasks that cannot be carried out, the process of exposure is very clear. And it seems to me that Marcy is one of those who believes in that kind of action. He was one of the main advocates in the party asking for a March-on-Washington to demand freedom for the Rosenbergs. In essence, you can make a parallel in these arguments. Wasn't he really demanding that the capitalist class do something and thereby create the illusion that Eisenhower, the executive arm of the government, might even free the Rosenbergs? The arguments presented now lack weight.

You have to realize that the question of breaking down illusions is a varied process of education, not only through armed struggles. You have to show how it is possible to follow through on a line of demands that expose the capitalist government, demands backed up and accepted by the Negro masses. So far you haven't done that.

You ought to explain at the first opportunity exactly what purpose you had in mind in calling for a March-on-Washington to demand freedom of the Rosenbergs.

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