

A Workers' Defense Guard Is the Only Answer to the Fascists

It Alone Will Fight The Fascist Threat To Workers' Rights

Workers Must Rely on Their Own Strength, Not on Boss Politicians, to Preserve Their Most Elementary Rights

In the present war situation every worker ought to keep two simple propositions in mind. First, the main enemies of democracy are not over the ocean but within these 48 states. Second, the fight against dictatorship and for democracy must begin at home.

Roosevelt and his fellow jingoists are striving to convince the American people that another war is necessary "to make the world safe for democracy."

Listen to Herbert Hoover speaking at Chicago on February 2 of this year. "A great war today... means democracy must temporarily surrender to dictatorship no matter what one may call it."

It means that our country must be mobilized into practically a fascist state. . . I speak of this not from hearsay, but as one who participated in the economic organization of the great war."

FASCIST GROUPS TAKING ROOT

The fight for democracy requires above all an exposure of the imperialist war-makers. But it also demands a struggle against other ultra-reactionary forces which in some cases for their own demagogic and reactionary reasons are at the moment in opposition to Roosevelt and Wall Street's war.

Fascist tendencies are taking root in many sections of the country. Some, like the German-American Bund, are direct branches of Nazism. But the majority, although they borrow ideas, inspiration, and even money from European sources, are home-bred and home-led products. Such fascist groupings as Roy Zachary's Silver Shirts, the Crusaders, and others led by Father Coughlin's propaganda, spring straight out of American soil, nourished by the misery of the unemployed, the discontent of the middle-classes of city and country, the plight of the farmers and a widespread disillusion with the New Deal and the old order of affairs. It is from these sources that the danger of a broad national fascist movement is to be feared.

RACE HATRED AND LABOR OPPOSITION

The main creed of these movements is anti-Semitism and opposition to organized labor, especially the C.I.O. Their aim is to smash the trade unions and curb their activities and thus keep the workers in servitude. They propose to take away the gains made by the workers in the past few years and to rob them of their rights of organization, free speech, and assembly. They are assisted in this work by the vigilante groups of the Associated Farmers and Manufacturers' Associations, by the various Citizens' Committees set up by Chambers of Commerce in the industrial areas of the Middle West, and by the hired scabs and gunmen of the great corporations.

How are the workers to protect themselves against the fascist gangsters? Experience has shown only one way. That is to form Union Defense Guards, whose task it shall be to defend labor unions, meetings, and activities as well as the persons of trade-union workers from attack. Akron rubber workers, Minneapolis teamsters, and progressive trade-unionists elsewhere have already seen the necessity for such organizations, and acted accordingly. These guards ought not to be hastily improvised in the teeth of danger but prepared in advance to perform their duties when need arises.

GUARDS ARE PERMANENT PICKETS

Such Union Defense Guards will be in reality permanent pickets. Every trade-unionist knows that the bosses and their scabs would have an easy time breaking strikes if pickets were not at hand to prevent them. These fascist groups are nothing less than permanent organizations of scabs in the service of the most reactionary bosses. The workers ought to be ready to repulse them whenever they raise their heads.

HAGUE THRIVES ON PUBLICITY

The workers can rely only upon their strength and organized forces in this struggle. Is not the case of Hague "convincing demonstration of this truth? Despite several years of struggle, the Hudson County Hitler still reigns in Jersey. Various methods were employed by the C.I.O. to undermine and overthrow him, to expose his despotism by national publicity. But Hague thrived on this propaganda, turned it to his own advantage, became a hero of Big Business. Liberal congressmen made verbal threats and then turned

tail and ran. Ostentatious parades and meetings were not only broken up by Hague's police and hired mobsters but Hague beat the C.I.O. at this game by staging far larger and more impressive popular demonstrations. The injunctions granted by the courts for and against Hague have resulted only in blockading the struggle but not in binding the Boss.

Through Farley, President Roosevelt solicited Hague's support in the 1938 elections. The promised investigation of his Department of Justice has come to nothing. Can one offend the Vice-Chairman of the Democratic National Committee with a presidential campaign in the offing? Such is the balance sheet of the campaigns against Hague which have now died down to a whisper.

ONLY ONE WAY TO OUST HAGUE

There was, and there remains, only one way to dislodge this local dictator and restore democratic rights to the people of New Jersey. A careful, patient organizing campaign by the C.I.O. unions backed up by an organized workers' guard capable of protecting meetings and resisting Hague's police and mobsters.

Anti-Semitism is the second item in the fascist stock-in-trade. Fortune Magazine's recent survey indicates that anti-Semitism is growing. The fascists are waging their fight against the workers, against all democratic and progressive ideas, under the guise of a struggle against "Judeo-Bolshevism." While the Jewish masses are becoming increasingly sensitive to this danger, they are still for the most part ignorant of the best means of combatting it. The anti-Nazi demonstrations held in Los Angeles, in New York at Madison Square Garden, in Philadelphia have shown them the way. The magnificent response of the workers of all faiths and political views to the call of the Socialist Workers Party demonstrates that more and more are beginning to understand that only direct action of this character can stop fascism from spreading.

POLICE AND COURTS PROTECT FASCISTS

These events have also shown that "liberal" politicians, the police, and the courts will, in the name of "law and order," concentrate upon defending the fascists while depriving the foes of fascism of their democratic rights. Did not LaGuardia's cops break up the counter-demonstrations around Madison Square Garden, ride down hundreds of anti-fascists, injure and arrest a dozen? And the judges completed the job by fining or jailing the militants.

Fascism thrives more than anything else upon the impotence and inertia of its opponents. The prerequisite for the rise and victory of Fascism is to make the workers believe that by relying, not upon their own organized forces but upon some external power upon the state, upon the police upon benevolent officials, upon democratic traditions, etc., that fascism can be defeated. This service is being performed today by a Popular Front of Democrats, liberals, labor leaders, Social Democrats, and Stalinists. Italy, Germany, Austria, Spain, and today France, teach that along this road lies not the defeat of Fascism but the defeat of the working masses.

THE ROAD TO VICTORY

The road to victory over fascism proceeds through direct and militant struggle against the forces of reaction. The fascist groups here are still weak. The labor movement, the progressive forces are strong. The time to crush fascism and anti-Semitism is now. The place: here in our own country. The means: Union Defense Guards and anti-fascist leagues which will shield labor from the inevitable onslaughts of the storm-troopers.

MAY DAY GREETINGS

from the

NEWARK Y.P.S.L.

In Memoriam of

Comrade Bernard Selesner

COUGHLIN DUPES FOLLOWERS WHEN HE SAYS HE'S PRO-LABOR

By GRACE SAUNDERS

In the discussion period at a recent Socialist Workers Party forum, a young worker took the floor to pose a few questions which he hoped, apparently, would embarrass the speaker. When asked if he were a fascist—a just query in view of his general conduct during the meeting—he indignantly asserted: "No, I am not a fascist. I hate the very word fascism." He was a follower of Father Coughlin, he explained, he believed in democracy and in social justice. He also vigorously denied that his idol, Father Coughlin, favored fascism or Hitler, or American involvement in a European war.

There is no reason to believe he was not completely sincere. Nor is there any reason to believe he is alone in thinking that Father Coughlin opposes fascism and is, in fact, the stalwart champion of democracy, for the worker, the unemployed, the youth, the farmer, the small businessman. Many Coughlinites, frequently some who display crass fascist tendencies, do not themselves understand the true import of their actions.

Yet they are being purposely and systematically duped. The first step in creating fascism is to divide the working class, to smash its most militant members and organizations first. With these out of the way, it is a comparatively easy matter later, at the appropriate time, to smash all workers' organizations, all democracy, all freedom.

Democratic Talk Is Pure Demagoguery

Father Coughlin of course doesn't give a hang about democracy. His use of democratic phraseology is the purest demagoguery in an adroit effort to foist upon this country a system of government essentially identical with that now existing in Germany. Tell this to a Coughlinite, and he will denounce you in the most insulting words in his vocabulary. He will call you a communist, a Jew, or both.

But it is instructive to note what Father Coughlin himself says on this subject. Apparently, in his championing of democracy, he makes a lot of exceptions. In his Sunday radio of March 26 (re-printed in his weekly magazine "Social Justice" of April 3) he said: "If the imperial conquests by Great Britain and France and the diabolical persecutions of Soviet Russia are the outstanding examples of European democracy, then it is my opinion that the sooner that type of hypocrisy perishes from the face of the earth, the better for all mankind."

So, then, he doesn't think so much of French and British democracy. Perhaps, though, he is wholeheartedly in favor of the American brand of democracy. Well, hardly wholeheartedly. In the same radio address he waxed vitriolic against those in the United States who for the past six years have boycotted the Third Reich "in the name of democracy." The Third Reich for the past six years? But that is Nazi Germany which, his followers tell us, Father Coughlin does not admire and does not seek to emulate. Curious, isn't it—or is it—that he seems so much more concerned about the boycotting of the Nazis than about the exercise of democratic rights.

For "Blood Business" On His Own Terms

But it is a slander, we are told, to assail Father Coughlin because of his attitude toward the war being cooked up in Europe. He says he is opposed to the United States becoming involved in that war. He says he is opposed to American workers sacrificing their lives in that war. Again, let us examine Father Coughlin's statements. Is he opposed to Americans sacrificing their lives in an imperialist war in Europe, or is he merely opposed to the United States aiding Great Britain and France—against Italy and Germany? We let Father Coughlin speak for himself. Fulminating against the "cash and carry" neutrality legislation proposed by Senator Key Pittman (which would obviously be to the detriment of the Rome-Berlin axis), he says this measure aims "definitely at putting America in the blood business not on the side of justice, but on the side of the biggest bank roll; not on the side of justified reform, but on the side of the status quo, thereby perpetuating injustice." (Signed article in the April 3 issue of "Social Justice.")

He is not, he says plainly, against America going into the "blood business." If America were to enter the war to bring about "justified reforms"—that is, the seizure of more territory by Mussolini and Hitler—the radio priest would give such "blood business" his blessing. According to him, that would be acting "on the side of justice." But if America aids France and England in preventing the Fascist-Nazi grab—that is, if America is "on the side of the status quo"—such action is indefensible, is "perpetuating injustice," and must be damned. "Injustice" to whom? Obviously to Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini. Curious? Or is it?

Program Like that of Hitler

But, the Coughlinite will still insist, Father Coughlin is really the friend of the worker, the farmer, the small businessman, etc., etc. You have only to look at the masthead of the magazine "Social Justice" to see for yourself. Point 10 in the 16 principles printed there calls for "Labor's Right to Organize." Similarly, point 9 calls for "The Cost of Production Plus a Fair Profit for the Farmer." And points 13 and 14 demand a "Broadened Base of Taxation on the Basis of Ownership and Capacity to Pay," and "Simplification of Government and Lower Taxes."

Surely this is quite clear. This is not a fascist program, say the Coughlinite. True, there is little similarity between this program and the program of fascism-in-power. But it is decidedly reminiscent of the programs of both Hitler and Mussolini before fascism and nazism had seized the reins of government.

On labor's right to organize, workers in Italy were told by Mussolini: "Labor has nothing to fear from the fascist power. . . Its just rights will be loyally guaranteed." Mussolini stated: "Nobody can dream of driving the working

masses back to less favorable working and living conditions than those of today."

In Germany, a Nazi spokesman assured: "We believe absolutely necessary the organization of workers into unions within the dominant capitalist system. . . . A Nazi propaganda pamphlet asserted: "It is a shameful lie to say that the National Socialists, when they have taken power. . . will deprive the workers of their supreme weapon: the right to strike."

Workers' rights were going to be fully protected. That is what the Nazis and the Fascists said before they came to power. That is what Father Coughlin is saying today. But after they came to power, it was, as everyone knows, quite another story.

Grandiose Promises to Farmers

Similarly, with regard to the farmers. Prior to the seizure of power, both the fascists and the Nazis were talking of giving the "land directly to the peasants to be cultivated by them jointly," and even of the need of an agrarian revolution. Compared to this, what Father Coughlin offers to the farmers of this country is mild indeed. Yet after the establishment of the dictatorship?

The fascists and Nazis were likewise glib in their promises to small businessmen. These were to be protected against competition, to be assured stability and security.

And so on and so forth. Before taking power, the fascists, like Father Coughlin now, made grandiose promises to all who, ground down under the chaotic system of capitalist democracy, were seeking a way out. They were—and are—easy victims of fascist demagoguery.

What they didn't understand in Germany and in Italy, and what the duped followers of Coughlin fail to understand here, is that not a single one of these promises will be kept, and that there was not, and is not, any intention of keeping them. While on the one hand, the fascists and the Nazis—in this country, Father Coughlin—promise everything to every man, on the other hand, they carefully foster a policy calculated not to bring about the reforms of which they prate, but to strangle all opposition and install the hideous regime of full-blown fascism.

We Won't Allow Him to Get Away with It!

Father Coughlin knows that his first and foremost task is to divide the working class and exterminate its most militant elements. For this dirty work, he uses those who believe he is the champion of democracy, that he hates communists because they are wicked and godless, but that he also disapproves of fascism. Once he has used his followers to get rid of their most class-conscious fellow-workers, he will be able to use his armed gangs (he hopes) to settle the score with any who protest that his promises are not being fulfilled.

The pattern is clear. It has been used before. It worked in Italy. It worked also in Germany. Why not in the United States?

If Father Coughlin is permitted to get away with turning worker against worker, smashing all militancy and all opposition to his movement, fascism will make headway in this country, just as it has elsewhere.

But, and this is a big "but," there is no reason why Father Coughlin should be permitted to get away with it. To his cry of "he's a red—smash his organization," the Coughlinite worker, and all other workers must reply, "Yes, but he is a worker, too, and his organization is a workers' organization. We do not scab in a strike, and we refuse to do the bosses' dirty work here."

It is high time the Coughlinite followers ask their leader, and themselves some of these very pertinent questions. For our part, the Socialist Workers Party will do everything in its power to organize the workers for the most vigorous and threatens to deprive them.

Minneapolis Guard Has Kept That City Clear of Nazi Thugs

Strongly-Organized Force of Union Workers Has Kept the Would-Be Storm Troopers With Their Backs Against the Wall

By A Defense Guard (Special to the Socialist Appeal) MINNEAPOLIS—Who says the American workers are ready to fight fascism? Minneapolis, Minnesota says so. The Minneapolis Union Defense Guard says so.

It is a lie and a reactionary lie that American workers have not grasped the fundamental meaning of fascism on the basis of what fascism has done to the workers of Europe. Far, far more clearly than the craven-hearted and demoralized "liberals" have the workers in this country understood the lessons of Germany, of Austria, and of Spain and France.

And given the chance—which means given an honest and courageous leadership—the American workers are willing, yes, eager, to organize for a struggle to the death against the fascist monster that would smash their strikes and their unions, raid their union halls, kill their leaders, crush their political parties, and force them into a monstrous slavery.

About one year ago the Silver Shirts held a series of public meetings in Minneapolis. It happened that in this city it was the Silver Shirts. In another city it might be the German-American Bund, the Black Legion, the White Legion, or some other aspiring fascist group.

The Fascist Plan

Roy Zachary, the Silver Shirt organizer, was pretty crude about his intentions. He worked his audience up with the usual anti-Semitic bunk, and then got down to work. Right away he proposed a raid on Local 544's hall. He picked out General Drivers Local 544 as the first victim because he knew the score. If the General Drivers Union can be cracked then the rest is easy pickings. Zachary learned this from the organized bosses of this state, who have been following out that policy since 1934.

If Zachary was crude, the president of the Minneapolis Associated Industries was even cruder. He attended a Silver Shirt meeting!

The Unions Plan Too

Minneapolis workers are not dumb. They got the point immediately. If the fight to protect their union had now reached the point where the bosses were ready to subsidize the fascist rats, then let's get ready for the fight and see who can take who.

The Minneapolis Union Defense Guard was launched as a result of the fascist meetings and threat. This organization, the first and strongest of its kind in the community, has been built through tireless and persistent work of trade union militants. Today stands as a permanent training force. The growth of reaction only stimulates the growth of the Union Guard as a bulwark of union strength against assault.

Two Hundred Squads

Under the strong and experienced leadership of a Guard Commander and two Guard Leaders, all men of military training—the Guard during the past year has completed its basic organization of 200 active Guard Captains, each Captain leading a squad of our men, making a unit of five. We have a handy unit to transport by auto. Provision is made for doubling each unit in the period of emergency that are sure to come.

The Guard Captains are hand-

picked men, the most loyal and active unionists, seasoned, resourceful, fearless, intelligent. The Captains have carefully picked their squads.

Test Mobilizations

Every man who so proudly wears the little gold badge—544UDG—is dead serious about his membership in his Union Guard. From time to time, test mobilizations have proven this.

Last November, for example, on one hour's notice, the Guard met for a trial mobilization on a vacant lot in the center of the city. Only three people knew whether the occasion was a real crisis. Three hundred men in fighting clothes poured into the vacant lot and formed ranks under direction of their Captains. It was only after short talks by the Guard leaders, followed by the announcement that it was just a test mobilization to be celebrated afterward at a local theater, that the grimness turned to merriment.

Another bright memory in the history of the Union Guard is a big dance held the Saturday before Christmas. Trade unionists attended by the hundreds. Proceeds of the affair were placed in the Guard fund.

Drilling and Study

The Minneapolis Union Defense Guard has just recently completed a six-weeks' course of drill work, with Guard meetings three nights weekly. When hard-working men demonstrate their understanding by such activity, only towards or "ools can say that a Hitler will necessarily come to power in America. "The only thing a fascist understands is a cracked head," says the Minneapolis Guard. It is ready to the last man to increase the understanding of any fascist gang so foolhardy as to move against the union movement here.

On the last night of the six-weeks' drill course, the regular meeting was turned into a Guard party. Guardsmen heard an analysis of "Union Enemies and How to Fight Them," by V. R. Dunne.

Based on Unions

The Minneapolis Guard at the present time is composed chiefly of workers in the driving crafts with the main base in Local 544. Workers from other unions have joined, however, and are preparing themselves to form active Guard Units in their own organizations. Guard leaders anticipate a steady growth of the organization.

A special feature of the Minneapolis Guard is its Intelligence Department. Guard members and their allies circulate throughout the Twin Cities and surrounding regions, and keep a sharp eye cocked for fascist literature, anti-Soviet activities, pro-propaganda, and the like. This information is sought and filed at a central point.

One can almost hear the horrid liberal, or some labor skeptic, exclaiming: "But all this is terrible. There is no surer way to provoke fascism, etc., etc."

No Fascists Meet! But there hasn't been a Silver Shirt or Bund meeting in Minneapolis during the past six months, despite a tenacious and lawless struggle locally that would have made such meetings inevitable had the Union Defense Guard not existed.

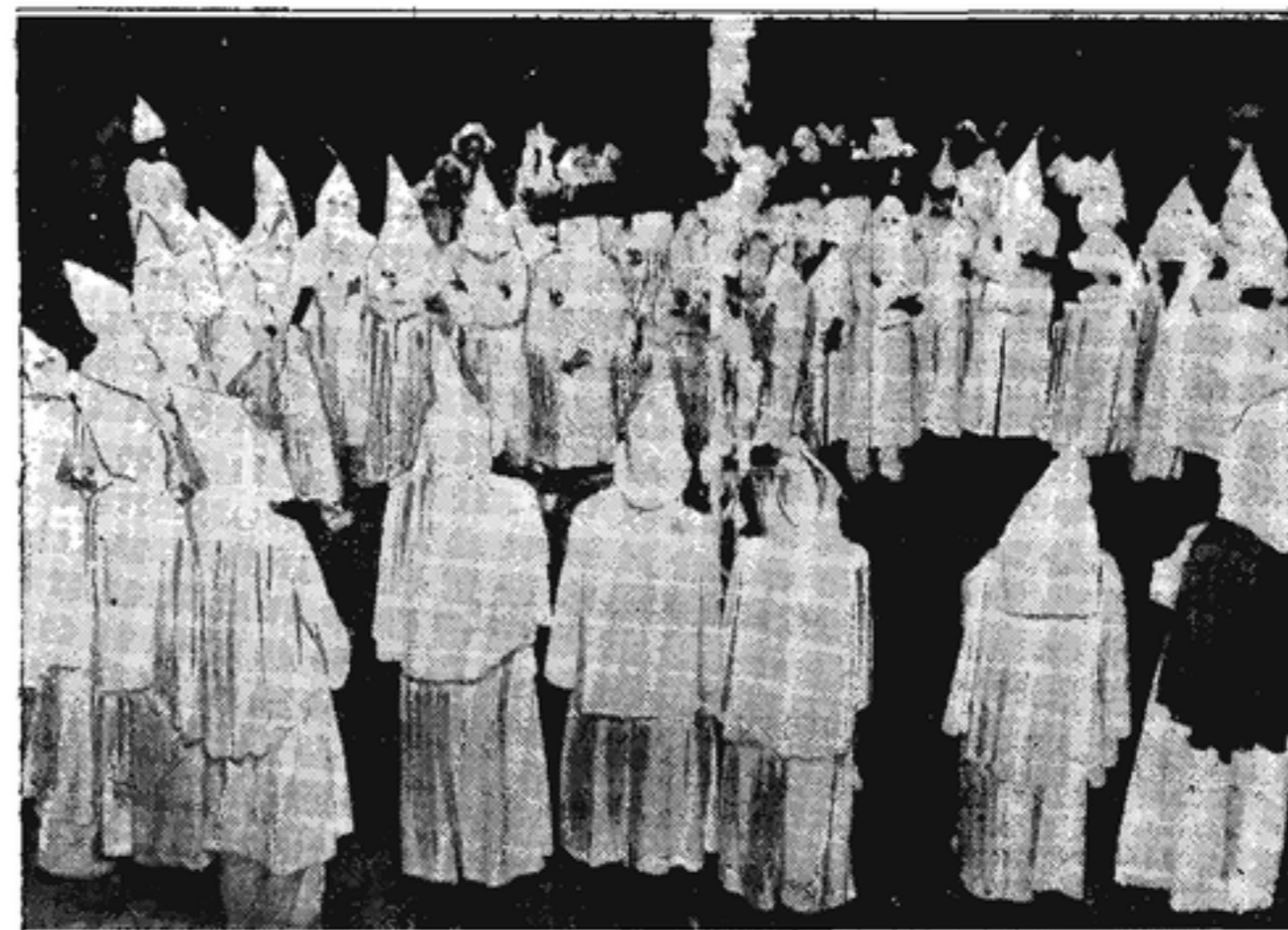
This isn't saying the fascists won't try to hold meetings here. The legislative attacks against the union movement, such as Stassen's anti-labor bill, will embolden the bosses and their agents. The next drop in the business index will bring the fascists.

When that time comes, Minneapolis will be ready. The workers of every city must prepare now so that they can say the same thing. Trade unionists everywhere who are interested in further details and aid in setting up Guard units have been invited to correspond with Guard Commander, % General Drivers Union Local 544, 237 Plymouth Avenue South, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

GREETINGS TO THE APPEAL.

A group of Food Workers in LOCAL 453

"Long Live the Fourth International!"



Greetings from a Group of Cutters of Local 10, I.L.G.W.U.

St. Louis, 1886: The First May Day!
St. Louis, April, 1917: Revolutionary Socialism
Against Imperialist War!
MAY DAY GREETINGS

LOCAL ST. LOUIS, City and County Branches

Greetings from a group of Philadelphia comrades