

WHITE POWER IN THE GHETTO

Introduction

The police have always served as an occupation army in the ghetto in Detroit and every other American city for the simple reason that America places force at the top of her list of alternatives for dealing with black people. The police have thus been the most immediate and powerful representative of white authority for black people, and the chief instrument of ghetto control for white people.

The "military" oppression of black people was greatly escalated during the recent disorder in Detroit. PAR has already collected information about a number of incidents of police hatred for black people. Some of this information is related below. Such incidents were extremely widespread, and this sample is by no means the total.

During the disorder, the actions of the police and national guard received the unanimous support of the white community. During the aftermath, white reaction has leaned heavily toward a better-prepared military occupation force to control the ghetto's residents in the future. Mayor Cavanagh has urged the adoption of a special permanent military plan to deal with future "emergencies." The national guard is to be specially trained. The sheriff's department has asked for funds for more equipment. The Chief of the Fire Department has suggested that it may be necessary to arm firemen.

The military response of white people to the problems of the ghetto is not new, but it is attaining new proportions. Until we understand that this view of the ghetto is itself the chief cause

of rebellions, we must live with the inevitability of a civil war and the annihilation of black Americans.

Cases

Arrested in own house. House searched. Gun not used in 25 years found by police. Police took \$350 and three bottles of scotch. Victim severely and repeatedly beaten, held three days, charges dropped.

Witnessed harassment and beating of innocent people. Police picked up two young Negro boys walking along the street, ordered them to lie on the grass, and then walked on the boys' hands. Police molested and beat a girl.

Woman charged with breaking and entering (now out of jail on \$500 bail) spent five days in the Wayne County Jail. Slept on concrete floor two or three days. Men and women were housed together. She was hit in the stomach with a rifle barrel while being arrested in a gas station.

Plaintiff went to White Tower restaurant to get girlfriend who worked there (7:45 p.m., 7/26). On way home was shot at and wounded. Sought refuge on a front porch where police found him and pistol-whipped him.

Two boys were en route to Fort Wayne Induction Center (4:00 am, 7/27). Stopped by police and national guardsmen. Were repeatedly beaten and harassed. Car windows smashed. Told repeatedly, "We don't want niggers in the army." Had to be hospitalized after police let them go.

Thirteen-year-old girl was visiting a friend (7:15 pm, 7/29). Was standing in the hallway talking when police entered building, shooting at random. Occupants of the building panicked and fled through the back door. Girl ran toward the back door, was shot in the back and fell down the stairs. Taken by police to Receiving Hospital where she was chained to the bed and given two shots. Was made to walk to police headquarters, interrogated, and taken home (no charges).

Man stopped by police and engaged in conversation until after curfew, then arrested. Repeatedly beaten and harassed; three police officers played tic-tac-toe on chest with bayonets. Held overnight; released with no charges.

Witnessed destruction by police on two successive nights of Vaughn's Bookstore. When plaintiff called Sgt. Slaughter of the 10th Precinct, Slaughter said that he ordered destruction because he heard there was a gun there.