

"WE 'VE HEARD THE VOICES AND SEEN THE BLOOD"

By John Judis

TO ROCK'N'ROLL FANS, TUPELO IS known as Elvis Presley's birthplace. The two-room shack he grew up in is preserved next to Elvis Presley Park, right off Elvis Presley Drive. On nice weekends hundreds of tourists pass through its portals at 50¢ a visit.

To corporate heads and labor union officials, Tupelo means something else. Located in northeastern Mississippi, Tupelo is nourished by the TVA, the potential of the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway and by a low-wage, non-unionized labor force that has grown rapidly in the last ten years. Multinationals like Rockwell International and FMC have set up shop there. The AFL-CIO has made Tupelo the headquarters of its Deep South organizing drive. Bright new shopping malls have sprung up along Main Street, which runs the length of Tupelo. The population, 20,000 in 1970, is now an estimated 28,000.

On Saturday, June 10, however, Tupelo was confrontation central for a new phase of the civil rights movement in the South. The United League, a black civil rights organization that has been fighting against police brutality and for a black share in Tupelo's newfound prosperity, called a rally for the same time and place as the Invisible Empire of the Ku Klux Klan.

Before the day was over, a cross had been burnt, three people had been arrested, a minister had been roughed up by the police, and a black Justice Department official had thrown his tape recorder and several well-aimed punches at a local racist. Also, the United League had emerged as a wave of the future, while the Klan appeared as a troublesome ripple from the past.

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Like other urban black movements, the one in Tupelo was sparked by police brutality. In July 1976 a black man, Eugene Pasto, was arrested on a check forgery charge while driving with a white woman.

Over a weekend, Pasto signed six confessions and six waivers of his rights. Sent to prison in Atlanta, Pasto claimed that two Tupelo police captains, Dale Cruber and Roy Sandefer, extracted the confessions through a merciless beating. Pasto sued them in civil court, and in January 1978 the court held that they were guilty and fined them each \$2,500. (In the two policemen's defense, the city had maintained that Pasto had poured salt in his own eyes.)

Sandefer and Cruber were suspended from the police force for two weeks while a police committee investigated their conduct. It found that they had done nothing criminal, and they were reinstated. At this point, the United League, headquartered in neighboring Holly Springs, stepped in to organize a protest in Tupelo.

The United League demanded that, in addition to firing the two policemen, the city and local businessmen enact an affirmative action program that would raise the percentage of blacks in Tupelo's workforce to their percentage in Tupelo's population. (The League estimates this as 30 percent.) They also demanded that Tupelo's schools hire black teachers and administrators, and that the police and fire departments be fully integrated, including the supervisory level.

On March 23, in response to the League's protests, the city demoted Cruber and Sandefer to lieutenants and transferred them to the fire department. Seeing this as no concession the League called the next day for a boycott of downtown businesses.

**"THE CHURCH IS HERE,"
ROBINSON TOLD THE
PARISHONERS, POUNDING
HIS HEART WITH HIS FIST.**

IN MID-APRIL THE CITY FORCED Cruber and Sandefer to resign from the police department. The Klan then came to Tupelo, reputedly at the request of local followers, to fight the League and to force the city to reinstate the policemen. They held local rallies in April and early May and announced a major "national rally" for June 10.

The League then called a rally of its own for that day.

On May 9 the city banned public demonstrations by either organization, but a judge overruled the order.

The city also requested a federal investigation of the federally-funded Northern Mississippi Rural Legal Services, one of whose lawyers, Lewis Myers, was the League's chief counsel. The League responded by adding the withdrawal of the request to its list of demands.

* * *

The United League was formed in 1968, inspired by police brutality in Holly Springs. In recent years, its main cause has been affirmative action for blacks in

the booming towns of northeast Mississippi and southwest Tennessee. In Holly Springs and Corinth, Miss., and in Ripley, Tenn., it is involved in struggles similar to that in Tupelo. Its founder and president, Alfred "Skip" Robinson, a Holly Springs contractor, claims 60,000 members in Mississippi and 5,000 in Tennessee.

Robinson is a man of unusual intensity. Like other southern civil rights leaders, it's difficult to tell where his religion ends and his politics begin. I went to Tupelo a week before the planned confrontation to meet Robinson. As we stood in front of the League's Holly Springs office on a quiet, sunny Sunday morning, Robinson explained the League's purpose.

"We're talking about going beyond integration," he said. "We're talking about justice for all. Integration has failed. We move into the white neighborhoods, they move into the suburbs, and we're left with the costs. They integrate the schools, and we lose all our black teachers and principals. We lose our black identity and pride."

Robinson does not want to abandon integration, but to obtain integration with justice. "Justice for all" is the League's slogan. He wants the workforce of Tupelo and other towns to reflect the proportion of town blacks not only in the number of workers, but in levels of authority and responsibility. He wants black principals, store managers, police captains and bankers, as well as black janitors and laborers.

Later that morning, I accompanied Robinson as he visited black churches to obtain their parishoners' support for the next week's march. Robinson is highly critical of most black ministers. "Most ministers have nothing but shout to offer," he said. "You go around black neighborhoods, and see women walking the streets, crime everywhere, nobody with a job, and you see a church steeple at every corner. You know something is wrong with the church."

Robinson put it a different way when he talked to the congregation at a Tupelo Baptist church. "This church is just an old building. The church is *here*," he told the parishoners, pounding his heart with his fist. "And the church is on the streets of Tupelo."

* * *

Some Tennessee Confederate soldiers established the Klan in 1865. Over the years, it has ebbed, only to revive during new periods of racial conflict.

It appeared to be dead by the 1880s,

but in 1915, William Joseph Simmons revived it. By 1925 it had claimed five million members throughout the country and was a major political force in the South and several northern states. Simmons described it as a "high-class, mystic, social patriotic society."

It was, above all, anti-black, continually pressing for American blacks to return to Africa; but it was also anti-semitic, anti-Catholic, and anti-immigrant. A secret organization, it got its way through lynchings, tar-and-featherings, crossburnings and other forms of extralegal intimidation.

The Klan declined in the '30s and was formally disbanded in 1944 to avoid federal tax charges. But in the wake of white resistance to the civil rights movement, it was revived in the late '50s, albeit in several different forms: the United Klan, the Knights of the Klan, the Invisible Empire of the Klan. By 1965 total Klan membership was estimated at 40,000, and during the '60s the Klan was credited with numerous bombings and murders.

But in the '70s, with Southern acquiescence in integration, the Klan entered a new decline. Its membership was recently estimated at 2,000. The Klan has seized upon Tupelo in hopes of reviving itself.

In the May issue of the *Klansman*, Imperial Wizard Bill Wilkinson called on Klan members to come for a showdown with the United League on June 10. The day before the march Klan officials predicted 500 Klan members would show up.

**"WE SHOULD HAVE HAD A
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SOME OF THEM."**

CONFRONTATION SATURDAY WAS bright, clear and hot—a day to parch the skin of a pale Northerner. On Tupelo's Main Street, merchants stood expectantly in front of their stores, while hooded men handed out *The Klansman* to white passersby.

A report in the *Lee County News*, Tupelo's principal weekly, had challenged the effectiveness of the downtown boycott, but the storeowners indicated otherwise. "We're known not to tell the truth when it hurts," D.M. Plowmale, the owner of the Debs Dollar Store, told me. With a business dependent on black customers,

Plowmale's was down by as much as 50 percent.

Plowmale was bitter. "We should have had a second civil war a few months ago and killed some of them," he said, referring to members of the League.

Felix Black, the owner of Black's Department Store, and president of local business association, also confirmed the damage done by the boycott, although he denied that his own store "was off a large percent." Black was most fearful about the conflict's effect on corporate plans to move to Tupelo or to expand existing facilities. "We have industries that hesitate to expand," he said.

Black claimed that the downtown merchants had done "everything feasible" to meet the League's demands. The previous week they had offered a black hiring program in their stores if the League would call off their boycott, but the League had refused because the offer didn't touch on city or industrial employment, nor on the request for an investigation of Northern Mississippi Legal Services.

Both marches had originally been scheduled to converge at the County courthouse at 2:00 p.m. for a rally. The prospect of the Klan and the United League sharing the same podium inspired the city's mayor, Clyde Whitaker, to ask for the National Guard and state troopers and to place the city's 65 policemen on duty. But early Saturday the League announced it would begin its march and rally early, and the police didn't permit the Klan to march until the League had left the courthouse.

"AND IF SOMEONE SHOULD TAKE MY LIFE OR THE LIFE OF OTHER LEADERS, LET BLOOD RAIN."

THE LEAGUE MARCH WOUND FROM the Springhill Baptist Church through Tupelo's black community to the courthouse. Led by a Datsun pickup with two rifles visible on its gunrack, some 600 marchers walked five abreast in a procession stretching three blocks. Tupelo police, with their "Tupelo, City of Southern Hospitality" emblems on their sleeves, lined the route with shotguns poised.

The Reverend Donald Jenkins, a Tupelo native who is the League's official minister, was ecstatic. "There's never been anything like this in Tupelo before," he said. "It's the first time Tupelo has ever gotten off its knees."

Joe Thomas, the head of the Tupelo NAACP, was among the marchers. He said he supported the movement, but not the boycott. He wouldn't say why, but I realized later that after losing a \$1.5 million anti-boycott suit in Port Gibson, Miss., the NAACP was not about to get involved in another boycott.

Thomas confirmed the League's charges of discrimination. Many businesses and jobs in Tupelo were "lily-white," he said, and few blacks were in positions of authority.

When I asked a local reporter about job discrimination, he also affirmed the League's charges. He disagreed with the League's estimate of a 30 percent black population in Tupelo, but remarked that many areas had no black employees. "Have you been downtown?" he asked. "Did you see any blacks working there?"

The courthouse rally was a spirited mixture of politics and religion. Sister Gray and her gospel quartet led off with a rousing "Help me Jesus to run this race." Rev. Jenkins followed with a prayer that included a "blessing for the mayor who has lost his way and allowed the Klansmen to become mayor."

Lee County League head Walter Stanfield then introduced "some people who God sent to Tupelo," League coordinator Howard Gunn, who is president of a vocational college in West Point, Miss., and League president "Skip" Robinson.

"We've come here because we've heard the voices and seen the blood," Gunn said. He warned the Klan "not to take it for cowardice that we are marching peacefully."

Surveying the crowd that had now swelled to a thousand, Robinson said he

had "asked the Lord to send me a thousand people, black and white. And Jesus has answered my prayer."

Robinson, who other League members already regard as a future martyr, brushed back fears of his death. "If you haven't discovered something worth dying for," he said, "you're not fit to live. I believe that when you walk on that last day, God'll ask you, 'What did you do when the Klan was attacking black people?' and if you say, 'Nothing,' he'll say, 'There's no room in this hotel.'"

"I'll be in Tupelo until justice comes down like rain," Robinson said. "And if someone should take my life or the life of other leaders, let blood rain."

"LOOK AT OUR CIVILIZATION AND LOOK AT THEIRS. DO YOU WANT THE U.S. TO BE LIKE ANGOLA?"

AS THE LEAGUE'S RALLY ENDED, the Klan gathered for its march at lot of an East Main St. shopping mall. Its route would be directly down Main Street.

I could count only 38 robed Klansmen in the parking lot. The Tupelo Klansmen wore hoods to protect their identity, but the rest could be seen.

They were a strange lot. There were hard, grizzled, middle-aged types who looked like they had been through a few lynchings, kids with beards who could pass for hippies on Berkeley's Telegraph Avenue, and thin, sallow young men who might be bank clerks.

I talked to an obese young Klansman from Birmingham, who was wearing a Klan insignia. He couldn't afford a robe, he said. He told me he had joined the Klan four years ago, while working as a gas station attendant.

According to him, a black co-worker was robbing the till, and he was having to make up the missing money. Then he heard of this organization that "stood up for white rights."

He had expected the Klan to be a "terrorist lynching organization," as the media portrayed it, but he found it to be very different. "It's a cause," he said. "A political cause."

Bill Wilkinson, the imperial wizard, was also in the parking lot, with the pants of his grey linen suit and his allegator loafers pointing out from underneath his white robe. "We decided not to call in too many people," Wilkinson said in explaining the attendance. "We felt the people of Tupelo could account for it themselves."

Several hundred Tupelo whites did line Main Street as the Klan marched to the courthouse. Like the Klansmen, the spectators were a mixed lot. T-shirts, beer bellies, seersucker suits, starched halter tops and shorts, dresses, and overalls cheered together as the Klansmen, their Confederate flags waving in the wind, wended their way to the courthouse.

The Klan rally began peacefully, but it almost turned into the riot city officials had expected from the League.

After a ragged rendition of "Dixie," in which the Klansmen on the courthouse steps kept forgetting the words, Mississippi Grand Dragon Douglas Coen, who works as a foreman in a nuclear submarine plant on the Mississippi coast, walked to stage center. He was flanked by Klansmen that one reporter had seen with rifles under their robes.

"We have thwarted the black movement in Tupelo," Coen boasted. "That is something that has not been done for 15 years. You may be the people to make whites throughout the U.S. realize they are the majority." From the crowd there were shouts of "go whites."

Bill Wilkinson explained the Klan's beliefs. "We believe that whites are the superior race," he said. "Look at our civilization and look at theirs. Do you want the U.S. to be like Angola?"

He heaped scorn upon black demands for affirmative action in the name of equal rights. "This is not equal rights," he said. "It is preferential treatment for an ungrateful and unqualified minority."

He told the audience that they were members of a new "civil rights movement

for white people. This crowd is small, but it is strong and symbolic."

At this point, David Ohmes, a white minister from the nearby Glen Mary Home Missionary Society, took exception to Wilkinson's remarks. "You symbolize hatred," he yelled at Wilkinson from the crowd. "How can you call yourselves Christians?" As the Klan supporters began to clench their fists, Wilkinson motioned to some Klansmen to go silence the heckler.

They jumped him and had him on the ground when the Tupelo police forced their way through the crowd, pushed aside the Klansmen, and gave Ohmes a little of their own medicine as they dragged him to an awaiting police van. When Susan Pearson, *IN THESE TIMES*' photographer, tried to photograph the police roughing up Ohmes, a Tupelo policeman pushed her away with his shotgun. Another reporter, Joe Shapiro of the *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, came to Pearson's defense, and when he followed the police down to the van with his camera, they arrested him and later charged him with conspiracy to incite riot.

Wilkinson called for the crowd, which had begun surging toward Ohmes, to remain calm, but only the sirens of the departing police van finally calmed the crowd. Wilkinson quickly ended his speech by urging everyone to attend that night's rally and cross-burning at the Natchez Trace Convention Center.

But the trouble had just begun. I was sitting in the small waiting room of the Tupelo jail with other reporters, when Fred Crawford, a black Justice Department representative who had come to Tupelo earlier in the week to mediate between the League and the city, came in to see what had happened to Ohmes and Shapiro.

As Crawford tried the waiting room door to the jail's inner sanctum, an older white man entered the waiting room behind him. "Look at the goddamn nigger," he said to Crawford. When Crawford turned around and asked him what he had said, he repeated it and reached into his pocket for a chain.

Crawford threw his taperecorder at the man's head. It missed and went through the glass entrance to the jail, sending glass cascading onto the sidewalk. Then he threw several good hard rights at the retreating man until the police burst into the room and stopped the fight. The police grabbed only Crawford until they realized he was a Justice Dept. official.

The man who called Crawford a "nigger" turned out to be the father of Dale Cruber, one of the policemen who had been forced to resign. As the police drove the press out of the waiting room and across the street, I saw Roy Sandefer, the other policeman who had been forced to resign, joking with the officers.

Mona Sharpe, the publisher of the *Lee County News*, confirmed suspicions that were beginning to accumulate. Yes, she said, several Tupelo policemen, including Cruber and Sandefer, were probably Klansmen. Cruber had spoken at an earlier Klan rally and had given a Hitler salute to the assembled throng.

"WE PREDICTED THE KLAN WOULD COME IN. EVERYTHING WE PREDICTED HAS COME TO PASS."

THE KLAN RALLY AND THE incident at the police station had revealed something of Tupelo's racist underside and of the resentment and anger that the League's actions had inspired among many Tupelo whites. League members I talked to thought the civil rights movement of the '50s and '60s had simply passed Tupelo by and that it is now witnessing the same conflicts that occurred earlier at Meridian or Selma or Birmingham. But Mona Sharpe had a more pessimistic interpretation.

"I don't think Tupelo's any different from the rest of Mississippi," she said. "It's probably no different from the rest of the country either. When the Klan comes out, people start thinking of lynching."

Sharpe believes in an American pluralism held together by force and power.

It was not that Tupelo was less racist than Chicago or Jackson, but that at certain times in certain places the power of blacks or of the federal government would be sufficient to effect change and silence the opposition. But opposition remained beneath the surface, ready to explode.

I don't agree fully with either Sharpe or the League. I believe the Klan has come to Tupelo and white resentment has boiled because Tupelo is different from much of America. But it is not different in having been untouched by the civil rights

THE POLICE: When David Ohmes shouted hatred. How can you call yourself a nigger? Several Klansmen jumped him. The Klansmen. They appeared to be him away. Susan Pearson took the



movement of the '60s. Tupelo's schools are far more integrated than Chicago's. It is different because under the impetus of Sunbelt industrialization and the League, it has entered a new stage of the civil rights movement—one that Robinson correctly describes as going "beyond integration."

The Klan rally that night indicated that the Klan had still not fully caught on in Tupelo. There were only 100 natives in the large convention hall. It reminded me of many recent political rallies with one speaker after another trying to pump enthusiasm into themselves and into a sparse listless crowd. Before it was time to light the cross, some of the 100 Tupelo residents had quietly filed out.

For a lover of Elvis and rock'n'roll, the rally also had its bitter ironies. Jerry

Photographs by Susan Pearson



out, "You symbolize Christians?" at the Klan's. Then the Tupelo police pushed away, laughing him up before and then as they dragged photos of the police as they were shoving her back.



THE LEAGUE: Above, United League President "Skip" Robinson (second from left) confers before the march with Rev. Donald Jenkins. Left, a marcher with a t-shirt that bears the official League motto.



THE KLAN: Above, a Klanswoman poses in her robe at the evening rally at the Natchez Trace Inn Convention Center. No Klanswomen had appeared in their robes at the earlier afternoon march and rally. Upper right, Mississippi Grand Dragon Douglas Coen speaks to the sparse crowd at the evening rally. His official seal graces the podium. Lower right, Imperial Wizard Bill Wilkinson tries to explain to *In These Times* reporter John Judis why only 38 of 500 previously expected Klan members had shown up for the march.



Pitts and his country rock band led off with "Hello Josephine, How do you do?" a song that came right out of Chuck Berry. Berry was a black singer who, along with Elvis, spawned that magical cross fertilization of black and white music that became rock'n'roll. Did Jerry Pitts understand this? I doubt it.

Even less so did Doug Coen. "Their culture and our culture are different," Coen announced from the stage. "Our culture has given the world science, technology, space travel and music. The blacks have their culture--it's spear-chucking and soul music."

To awaken the crowd, the Klan speakers tried to outdo each other in racist ranting. "The Negro's brain is smaller than a hummingbird's," Karl Miller proclaimed. "Their aspirations are low," Bill Wil-

kinson explained. "All the basic Negro wants is a warm place to stay, a little wine, and some women."

As the Klan members led the remaining audience outside to witness the cross lighting, I asked a young woman who was covering the woman for Tupelo TV what she thought of the proceedings. "I'm really sorry this is happening to our town," she said.

Before leaving Tupelo, I went to see Skip Robinson and Lewis Myers at the League office. Myers is tall, scholarly looking, with wire-rimmed glasses. He seems the sophisticated agnostic in a group given to mixing politics and religion.

When I asked him what the march and rally had accomplished, he said, "It is important for black people to take a more aggressive posture against this kind of

racism. Ten years ago you wouldn't have gotten black people to stand up against the Klan. But now each time the Klan has done something, we've stood up."

Myers sees in the League a departure from Martin Luther King's non-violence. "I grew up in a generation that said, 'Don't challenge that. Let God take care of that,'" Myers said. "That was the generation that Martin led. He elevated non-violence from a tactic to a philosophy. It came to have a sanctity."

Myers thinks blacks must defend themselves. "The Klan took it to another level," he said. "If a Klansman fires a shotgun, he'll get shot."

Robinson entered the room while I was talking to Myers. He was jubilant. "In the beginning of the movement, we told people what they'd be confronted with,"

he said. "We predicted that the Klan would come in. Everything we predicted has come to pass."

I asked Robinson what he predicted for the future. "Next week, the white people will begin to negotiate," he said. "Everything they've tried to do, the movement has grown stronger."

Was he right? Holly Springs had recently agreed to negotiate with the League, and head Tupelo merchant Felix Black had seemed ready to break. But it was still hard to imagine many of Tupelo's white citizenry, their hearts bent on revenge rather than reconciliation, permitting their city government to accede to the League's wishes.

The League will win, it seemed to me, but it will not happen the next week or even the week after. ■

IN THESE TIMES

Editorial

The poor get poorer, the rich go to school

The House of Representatives voted (237-158) for tax credits up to \$250 on private college tuitions and (209-194) up to \$100 on private elementary and secondary school tuitions.

The action smacks of a demagogic, perhaps panic-ridden, attempt to placate middle and upper income voters, and parochial school interests in an election year. It is demagogic because, as the legislators must know, the measure violates the constitutional principle of the separation of church and state. (The majority of private lower schools are parochial.) Court rulings have made this clear beyond cavil and Attorney General Griffin Bell has so advised Congress. As the legislators also know, President Carter will veto the measure—if he sticks to his promises for a change—and its backers have nowhere near the votes to override a veto.

As President Carter said in his declaration of intent to veto, such tuition tax credits would in effect become the largest

federal outlay for education, and would aid the affluent and wealthy most, middle and lower income families with children in public schools not at all. (The Congressional Budget Office estimates that

fed in this year's elections, would intensify.

The public schools would become even more than now the inferior educational facilities for the non-white and poor; the

Tuition tax credits for private education would end all pretense that the educational system serves equalitarian purposes.

families with incomes over \$20,000 would grab 78 percent of the college credits.)

The impact on public elementary and secondary schools, moreover, would be devastating. Their already underfunded and deteriorating condition would only get worse as they lost more students to tax-subsidized private schools. The loss of students would bring a further drain of public funding allocated on a per pupil basis. The tendency to starve the public schools of tax funds, so strongly mani-

private schools the vehicles of privilege sanctioned by public law and subsidy. The American educational system is already stratified by class and race and is an agency of sustaining such stratification. Passage of the tuition tax credit would end all pretense that America's educational system serves the purposes of a democratic and equalitarian society.

President Carter's promise to veto the tax credit, should Congress pass it, is admirable and should be supported. But it

doesn't go far enough. With voter rejection of state and local taxes and revenue bonds for public education, there will have to be more federal support and funding. There ought also to be federal tax credits for tuition payments to public colleges by families with incomes under \$25,000, and for that portion of state and local taxes going to fund public education.

Such measures will require higher taxes on the corporations and the rich, and a healthy full employment economy to avoid loss of federal revenues and higher deficits. It will in the last analysis also require transferring funds from wasteful military expenditures.

Otherwise we will continue to dishonor the traditional American commitment to quality public education recognized as necessary to equal opportunity and a more democratic society. We've already learned we can't have "guns and butter." Nor can we have guns and books. ■

Sadat's "democracy": Open doors, closed minds

In justifying last month's referendum "legitimizing" suppression of civil liberties and press freedom in Egypt, President Anwar el-Sadat said that dissenters should take a lesson in national unity from the Israelis, who rallied to the support of their Prime Minister Menachem Begin against American pressures for greater flexibility in Middle Eastern affairs.

There are two things wrong with Sadat's homily. First, Israeli civil liberties and press freedom remain intact and vigorously exercised. It is Israeli democracy, not its suppression, that contributes powerfully to national pride and strength, while giving free rein to criticism, dissent, and proposals for new policies and even a new government. If Sadat is looking for a genuine parallel, he might say that

as Israel restricts Arab liberties in the occupied territories, so his government will suppress Arab liberties in Egypt.

Second, Sadat's anti-democratic measures have nothing to do with the conflict with Israel. Rather, they have mostly to do with arrangements his government is making for cooperation with the West.

Egyptian envoys are now in Paris seeking \$20 billion for debt financing and development from lending agencies of 13 nations gathered under the auspices of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. With a G.N.P. of \$14 billion, Egypt has \$12 billion in long-term foreign debt and several billions more in short term obligations. Loans of \$3.5 billion from these agencies in 1977 went to pay debt arrears and for food imports,

with nothing left for development. The banks demanded terms, including the end of food subsidies, that led to riots in January 1977. Sadat blamed these on the Communists.

This time around, the banks are demanding stiffer terms; for example, controls over Egyptian fiscal policy, greater freedom for foreign capital, fewer subsidies for domestic industry, and higher taxes.

"All these measures," as Youssef M. Ibrahim notes in the *New York Times* (June 14), "would mean a continued rise in domestic prices [the annual inflation rate has been over 20 percent since 1974], but with continued pressure for wage restraints." Sadat's open door for foreign capital since he closed the door on the

Russians in 1974, notes Ibrahim, "has yet to show...material benefits...[for] the Egyptian people, save for the gleaming Mercedes-Benz...driven by Egypt's new merchant class..."

It is no surprise that Sadat's policies are under attack both from workers and national bourgeois elements on the left and traditionalists on the right. In cracking down on democratic liberties (which were already substantially restricted), Sadat is preparing to deal with even sharper social conflict that must inevitably arise upon consummation of a deal with western finance.

What that deal has to do with "social peace, national unity, and socialist democracy," in the name of which Sadat justifies the crackdown, is impossible to fathom. Another Mystery of the Sphinx. ■

Fighting the Nazis by practicing democracy

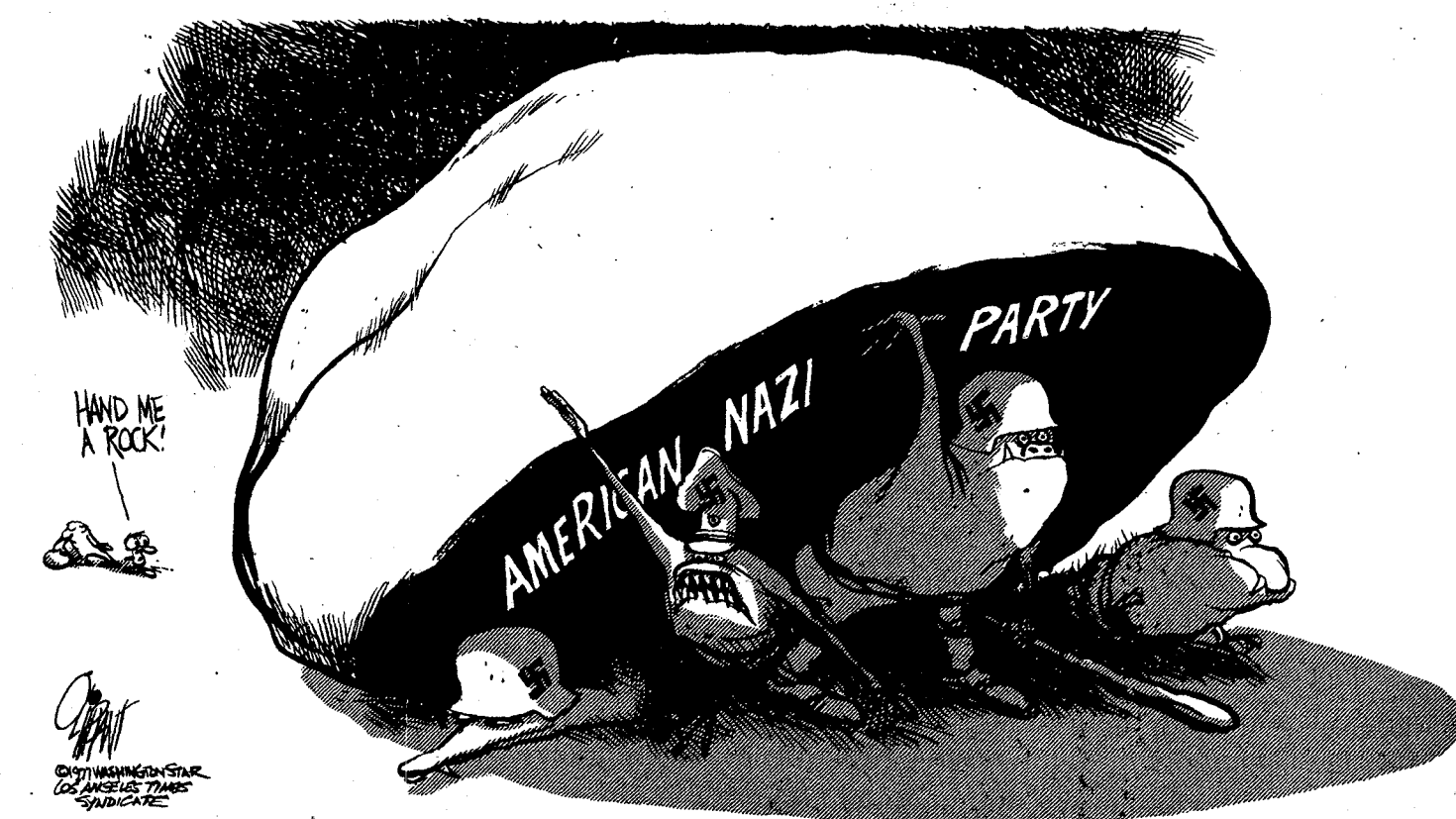
In the face of the Nazi march scheduled June 25 in the Chicago suburb of Skokie, plans are underway for counter-demonstrations in Chicago and Skokie June 24 and 25. Thousands of people of all faiths, ethnic and racial origins, and political beliefs are expected to demonstrate solidarity against Nazism.

Nazi maneuvers in Illinois elicited two distinct responses. One sought passage of city ordinances and state laws to curb freedom of speech and association, thereby allowing the Nazis to stampede us into restricting our liberties and strengthening the authoritarian powers of government. Had that come to pass the victory would not have been ours but theirs—and without the Nazis having to set foot in the streets.

As it turned out, reason and the depth of American commitment to liberty prevented that from happening. The courts denied the constitutionality of Skokie's ordinances. And the Illinois House of Representatives overwhelmingly rejected two dangerous anti-civil liberties bills that had been passed by the Illinois Senate.

The other response is epitomized by the counter-demonstrations. It is the strongest answer to Nazism: We will fight racism and despotic movements by bringing them out into the open, by exposing their true nature and their roots in injustice, fear and bigotry, and by strengthening the commitment to equality and democratic liberties through public discussion, education and demonstration.

The way to defeat Nazism and all other



BACK FROM UNDER THE ROCK

racist and despotic tendencies is not to pretend they don't exist by keeping them out of public view, but as the blacks in Tupelo (see story, p. 11) and throughout the U.S. have shown, by confronting them without fear and with confidence. Democratic liberties can only be strengthened by exercising them.

One of the ironies of the attempt to

prevent the Nazis from marching is that it gave them months of publicity they could not otherwise have dreamed of getting. The publicity did not expose their infamy but falsely made them appear as a persecuted minority defending basic liberties. In the process, too, the media have fallen into their usual myopia of portraying the conflict as primarily between Nazis

and Jews. It is in reality between Nazis and all partisans of democracy and humanity.

But the counter-demonstration in Skokie on June 25, and the one on June 24 at Chicago's federal building plaza afford the opportunity to raise awareness of that reality and to reaffirm that we shall never forget the horrors of Nazism or allow them to recur. ■