

Union of Fed.
3/20/37

VIGILANTISM DELUXE

OPEN FORUM 3/20/37
(Continued from last week)

A Semi-Military Organization

"As regards the organization itself, a close resemblance to the Fascist or Nazi technique is in evidence. Members are, or were recruited, on the basis of 'patriotic duty'! They are then registered in a roll book, finger-printed by the police department, given a registration card with a number and are assigned alphabetically to a platoon. The organization as a whole functioned on a semi-military basis and was divided up into platoons under a platoon Commander, companies under Captains and so on down the line. Uniforms do not appear to have been in evidence at any time, though windshield stickers were available to members who were also provided with white arm-bands with the letters B. N. on them.

"At all meetings, many of which are alleged to have been held in school buildings, members were told that strikers were misled by Communists who were using the strike as a means of revolution. The Nationals were to be ready to meet this threat of Revolution which was of course far beyond effective control by such duly constituted authorities as the Police Department, the State Militia, or the U. S. Army.

'Armed with Truncheons'

"The activities of the Berkeley Nationals appear to have been to some extent of the Boy Scout variety. That is to say, armed with truncheons they did rather extensive patrol duty along the more populous thoroughfares of Berkeley, such as Shattuck Avenue, Telegraph Avenue, and San Pablo Avenue—thoroughfares which would of course have been the first objectives of the Red hordes massed in the Berkeley Hills.

"In addition, the Berkeley Nationals conducted a survey of homes to find out how many 'fighting men' would be available in case of 'emergency.' This 'emergency' was a visionary march of the Reds from somewhere 'south through the waterfront industrial area.' Information was also collected and relayed to a central headquarters and there graphically portrayed on a large map. On this map, each home in which there was a 'Red' was marked by a red pin. Some of the homes so marked were visited by the Berkeley Nationals during the strike and had bricks thrown through their windows (Right here, of course, the Boy Scout simile breaks down).

Tie-in Between "Nationals" and Police

"The real highlight of the activities of the gang of hoodlums who constituted the Berkeley Nationals was their raid on the Finnish Comrades Association Hall, which resulted in the destruction of five thousand dollars' worth of property. Of particular interest in this connection is the evidence of a very close tie-in between the Berkeley Nationals and the Berkeley police. It has definitely been proved that the police were given notice of the raid on the Finnish Hall 15 minutes before it occurred, sent out a radio call for a police car to investigate, and then a few minutes later cancelled the call. A police car parked among the vigilante cars, within view of the building, while the raid took place.

"Additional evidence would also seem to indicate that there was a close relationship between the Berkeley Nationals on the one hand and the Chamber of Commerce, the Knights of Columbus, the Kiwanis Club, Rotary Club, etc., on the other.

"Berkeley is essentially a respectable little town; life, particularly of the night variety, is dull, and while we sympathize with attempts of several hundred Berkeley citizenry to inject a more exciting note into a rather drab existence, we would suggest another form of emotional outlet, one that is less flagrantly in defiance of the elementary rights granted even to 'Reds' under the Constitution. The difference between a civilized community, and one that is not civilized, is very simple. In a civilized community, one does not take the law into

one's hands. It is unfortunate to say the least of it, that the University town of Berkeley ceased, if only temporarily, to become a civilized community."