

Mafia pigs?

Fifth Estate Collective

1968

Last issue we hinted that perhaps Detroit Police Commissioner Johannes Spreen was trying to do something about the brutal and racist nature of his police by disciplining officers involved in incidents of brutality at the Veteran's Memorial Building and Poor People's March. Criminal charges were even brought against two officers for their roles in brutalizing two teenagers.

Spreen issued his report on the Oct. 29 Wallace demonstration incident and said the police had used no excessive force in dispersing the demonstrators. He came to the incredible conclusion that "Consistent organized squad action finally cleared the area of all people with no serious incidents reported to the police."

What a whitewash! There was no consistent organized anything on the part of the police. They were a disorganized mob, striking anybody that got in their way, including innocent bystanders.

Who would report anything to the police when they were the group carrying out the violence?

It's evident from Spreen's report where he is at. He is going to make no more attempt to control the men under his command than his predecessors.

Detroit Scope magazine, in its Dec. 7 issue, says that according to Peter Lazaros, Mafia tipster, the reason it took Mayor Cavanagh so long to find a new commissioner to replace Ray Girardin was that Cavanagh was looking for a man "who would not be too good."

This desire, of course, had nothing to do with "community relations," but with Lazaros' charges that Mafia payoffs reached deep into the upper echelons of the Detroit police and even to the Mayor's office itself.

While the cops and public officials are yelling for law and order, Lazaros' testimony is expected to show Mafia control of Oakland and Wayne County elected officials and police.

Already named by Lazaros or presently under investigation for Mafia connections are Sgts. Joseph Lesche and Harold Ligget, both aids to Commissioner Spreen, District Inspector James Bannon, Chief of Detectives Edward Sash, and in Oakland County, Prosecutor S. Jerome Bronson, a big anti-dope crusader.

According to *Detroit Scope* quoting an investigator, that if a tough police commissioner was appointed in Detroit that 200 or 300 police officers would resign from the force.

This gets to the root of the problem. As *Life* magazine said in its expose of corruption of the Chicago police, "Police on the take can't take orders."

Brutality and corruption in the Detroit Police Department must be ended. It is clear that the corruption reaches the highest level of government, so it is up to the citizenry to begin the action to end it.

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