

Un-American Committee And the Negro People

By Claudia Jones (First of three articles)

THE PROCEDURE of the House Un-American Committee in bringing before it spokesmen of the Negro people to impugn and place under suspicion the loyalty of the Negro people is something new. Never before in the history of the nation has the loyalty of a whole people been so attacked. It is not enough that the Negro people are subjected to lynch violence, terror and police brutality and numerous other indignities under the second class Jimcrow lynch system which is our lot in the United States. But the very citizenship of 14 million Negro Americans was put under suspicion in these hearings in which Negroes were treated as wards or field hands of an imperialist state.

Unwittingly, of course, these hearings were a reverse admission of the nationhood of the Negro people, who, as a people, are nationally oppressed in the Black Belt of the South. That is their condition of life, regardless of their class position throughout the land. The hearings confirmed the proof of their special oppression and the warning that the drive to fascism, overnight can wipe out the progress made by a people enslaved in a hundred different ways despite the abolition of chattel slavery.

UNDER HITLER GERMANY many Jewish citizens were integrated into German life and society.

But, despite this integration, the poison of "aryan" supremacy, and the cultivation of anti-Semitism and other chauvinist practices led to the wiping out of six million Jews and laid the basis for the murder of millions of non-Jews in Germany and throughout Europe as well. How much more so is this true of the United States, where the historic use of racism and "white supremacy" is a virtual springboard for fascism.

Assuredly, to haul citizens before a witchhunting Congressional committee is to lay the basis for a continuing pro-fascist strategy of big business and its mouthpieces in Congress, which demand adherence to the "ideals" of the committee. Those ideals can best be gauged by the "loyalty" and "patriotism" of the committee members, including its polltax chairman, and the members silent acquiescence to the KKK murders of Negro citizens. Those ideals are nurtured and



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sustained by an Administration and Department of Justice, who wink at lynching, polltaxes, denial of bail to deportation victims and Communist defendants while they shout their pious concern for civil rights in America — and push forward police-state rule.

A DAY AFTER the hearings, the homes of three Negro citizens were burned by the KKK in Stukey's Hill — the Negro community of Groveland, Fla. A week later bombs destroyed the suburban home of Chicago Negro residents. Not a peep has yet been heard from this committee who demands loyalty to the Jimcrow lynch system. Not a hearing has been scheduled to question the loyalty of the KKK white supremacist mobs who do violence to the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Nor will any be called.

This pattern of commanding loyalty by "thought control" (in these days of reactionary offensive in which Communist leaders are jailed without bail for their political beliefs, in a biased trial before a biased judge) is a smokescreen to obscure the issues of peace, security and equality for the Negro people, labor and other oppressed minorities.

American imperialism has increasing need for this smokescreen of hysteria as the people become more aware of the danger, as they feel the burdens of the economic crisis. Thus, imperialism accelerates national

chauvinism, and racial chauvinism, the better to facilitate its drive towards world conquest, fascism and war. Thus, on all issues, the Hitler lie of Communist - baiting and war hysteria. Like robbers, the imperialists do not hesitate to utilize the oppressed themselves, if necessary, to achieve their foul ends.

THE HEARINGS were timed at a strategic moment for American imperialist reaction. To begin with, and primarily, they coincided with the pivotal attack on civil liberties at Foley Square where 12 Communist leaders face a heresy trial for their political ideas because of indictments by the Department of Justice and the Truman Administration.

Three of the defendants were jailed for protesting the obvious bias of a judge, who serves monopoly capital, and who sought to put in jeopardy the names of thousands of working class men and women by demanding that the defendants become stoolpigeons. Among those protesting this infamy, was Henry Winston, outstanding Negro leader, national administrative secretary of the Communist Party, a Negro veteran who was remanded to jail for the duration of the trial with two white defendants for the statement that "over 5,000 Negroes had been lynched and not a single lyncher brought to justice!" — and, for his protest against the stoolpigeon edict of a judge which would result in the lynching and terrorizing of Negro workers.

The trial reached a significant highlight in the testimony of Benjamin J. Davis, Communist leader and Councilman from the city of New York. Davis had indicted the Jimcrow lynch system. His powerful indictment of the varied forms of capitalist class violence against the working class, the Negro people and other democratic minded people could not be refuted by the government's prosecutor. Vulnerable as it always is on the Negro question, the prosecution did not dare to jail Davis. It is still burning somersaults in an effort to explain away his testi-

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mony which was all the more powerful, because as part of the Negro liberation movement, the Communist leader utilized the weapon of Marxism-Leninism to throw light on the forces responsible for the national oppression of the Negro people—the capitalist class itself.

The same capitalist class that stupidly calls Ben Davis a “dupe” or insultingly a “good boy” is the same capitalist class that rushes to editorialize on Jackie Robinson — Daily News style — as “a credit to his people and nation” while it imprisons Henry Winston for protesting unpunished lynchings.

And it is the same capitalist class that seeks to throw its dwarf-like shafts against Paul Robeson—a man who strides on five continents with anti-fascist, anti-imperialist truth as a weapon, for which he is beloved. The capitalists simply show their fear of the democratic forces with which Robeson is aligned in his profound identity with his own people, the Negro people, the nationally and colonially oppressed peoples of the world.

Their aim in these hearings was to black-out the impact of Davis' testimony, the jailing of Winston—in short, to obscure the truth of what Robinson himself declared, namely “the fact that a Communist denounces injustice in the courts, police brutality and lynching when it happens doesn't change the truth of his charges.”

It is necessary, therefore, to further examine why the House Un-Americans selected Jackie Robinson as the star witness among the Negro leaders that they hauled before their committee. (Continued Tomorrow)