

NEGRO BOY, SHOT BY COP MAR. 19, DIES

Communists Give Proof of Jim-Crowism to Mayor's Committee

By Cyril Briggs

Sixteen-year-old Lloyd Hobbs, Negro high school boy, died in Harlem Hospital Saturday night, less than four hours after his brother, Russell, 15-year-old school boy, testifying at the open hearings of the Mayor's Committee investigating the March 19 outbreak in Harlem, had related how Lloyd was brutally shot down by Patrolman McIniny, white, of the West 123rd Street Station. Lloyd's death is the fourth fatality in the murderous terror unleashed by police on March 19 against the hungry workers of Harlem. In addition, on March 23, Edward Laurie, 32-year-old Negro worker, was callously murdered by Patrolman Abraham Zabutinski, police killer of a Porto Rican school child last Sept. 5.

Russell, a black-skinned, undersized lad who was accompanied by his father, testified that Lloyd and himself were standing at the corner of Seventh Avenue and 127th Street on the night of March 19. They had just come out of a show on West 125th Street and were unaware of the disturbances earlier in the evening before the Kress store, West 125th Street. A police radio car rushed up, a policeman jumped out in front of the two lads, and the frightened children fled to escape manhandling. In their fright they took off in different directions. As Russell ran off he heard the report of a shot. Returning later to look for his brother he was told by a spectator that "the boy who was with you was shot by a policeman."

Lloyd, wounded in the abdomen, remained unconscious to the end, ~~according to the hospital reports.~~ The police whitewashed the shooting of the innocent school boy, with the lie that he had been caught in the act of looting stores, whose windows had been smashed by in-

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Negro workers protesting against conditions and Jim-crow relief in discrimination and jobs in Harlem. The family of the murdered boy lives at 321 St. Nicholas Avenue.

Russell's story of the brutal shooting of his brother, told simply and timidly, was one of a number of telling indictments of police brutality made at the open hearing of the Mayor's Committee held in the Seventh District Court at 455 West 151st Street. The hearing opened at 10 a.m. and continued until 6:30 p.m. with an hour's recess for lunch.

Ford Presents Evidence

James W. Ford, Communist leader in Harlem, offered evidence on 15 cases of police brutality in the recent period, of pestilential housing conditions in Harlem, and Jim-crow discrimination by the city and its relief agencies in the administering of relief, on public works and in the case of private employers who refuse employment to Negroes except as porters and scrubwomen.

Robert A. vander, veteran Communist leader and a vice-president of the League of Struggle for Negro Rights, indignantly denounced the police murders and mass arrests of Negro workers in connection with the March 19 events, and the subsequent whitewashing of the police killers. He demanded that the Mayor's Committee investigate these wanton police killings and the long record of bestial police brutality against the people of Harlem.

Police Admit Jim-Crowism

Minor, who with Joseph Tauber, Labor Defense attorneys, questioned the witnesses, pinned the police witnesses to admissions of the starvation conditions and Jim-crow discrimination imposed by the ruling class upon the Negro people. He offered to present the committee with proof of discrimination in relief by the city against unemployed Negro families.

Witnesses, including some of the police, agreed that the Young Liberator leaflets, blamed by District Attorney William C. Dodge and Mayor LaGuardia for the outbreak, had not appeared on the streets until two hours after the outburst had reached its highest point in the smashing of store windows along 125th Street. Police Inspector John J. diMarino indirectly gave the lie to the Dodge-LaGuardia red-baiting campaign in his admission that the outbreak had not been caused by any political group.

Arthur Garfield Hays, attorney, who presided, after hearing police and other witnesses, declared that there had been lots of circumstantial evidence on the night of March 19 to support the general belief in Harlem that a Negro child had been killed in the S. H. Kress store. He criticized the mystery with which the store management and the police had surrounded the affair; their refusal to produce the boy or to make any explanation to the indignant woman demanding information on the child.

Loud boos from over 600 persons, mostly Negroes, who attended the hearing, greeted Alexander H. Kaminsky, assistant district attorney, who appeared before the committee to report on the indictments obtained by District Attorney Dodge against over a dozen Harlem workers, but refused to discuss the nature of the indictments. His statement that he would refuse to discuss the indictments "before these irresponsible people," brought sharp protests from Minor and the I. L. D. attorneys, Tauber and Kuntz. Hays here interjected that Kaminsky "had no right to call these men irresponsible because their views are different from yours."

Cite Cases of Terror

John Romney, Negro attorney representing the Civil Rights Protective Association, cited many cases of police terror, including the murder of an East Indian child last year.

Police Inspector di Martini and other police witnesses admitted the existence of long-standing ill-feeling between the people of Harlem and the police. Suave and debonair, di Martini at the same time told the committee that the people of Harlem all loved him. This evoked an outburst of sarcastic laughter from the crowd.

The police inspector boasted that his fertile brain had concocted the idea of having the lone Negro police lieutenant, Samuel J. Battles, take his photograph in a protective pose with Lina Rivera, the 16-year old boy produced by the police as the boy whose reported beating by Kress store floor-walkers and police provided the spark for the March 19 outbreak. An emergency call had been sent out for Battles, di Martini stated, and the photographs released to the press in an effort to off-set the persistent rumors in Harlem that a 10-year old Negro child had been brutally beaten and killed at Kress's. Many in the courtroom wondered if di Martini's imagination had extended beyond the "protective posing" of Battles with the Rivera boy. Throughout the hearing, the Mayor's Committee sought to dispose of rumors, still persisting in Harlem, that the Rivera boy had been substituted by the police for the real victim.

Charge Trapped

The Harlem boy, testifying, denied he had been beaten or even taken into the basement at Kress's. Patrolman Donohue, who was among the first policemen to reach the store, testified that the boy had been taken into the basement. Tauber, I. L. D. attorney, asked the Rivera boy if the Kress people and the police had promised to drop the charge against him of stealing a penknife if he denied he had been beaten. The boy denied this. Tauber pointed out that the charge was not being pressed.

Joseph Taylor, president of the Young Liberators, testified that on the afternoon of March 19, workers had come to the office of the Young Liberators to report the beating of a Negro child in Kress's. He then set out to investigate the matter, but was refused any information by the Kress people and the police. Meantime, other workers had visited the office and the organization had got out a leaflet.

Police Provocative

Louise Thompson and several

when they asked information about the boy.

Hays and other members of the Mayor's Committee attempted to force Ford to admit that the presence of a police army was necessary to maintain "order" that night in Harlem. Hays asked:

"Do you think that Harlem would have been better off if the police had been absent?"

No Police Thugs in U.S.S.R.

Ford quickly retorted that when the people organize their own government as in the Soviet Union, they will set up their own defense forces and there would then be no clashes between the people and police. The role of the police under capitalism, he pointed out, is to protect the Kresses and other property owners. "I have lived in the Soviet Union for several years, and people there are not shot down and beaten by police thugs."

Ford's statement caused a commotion in the Mayor's Committee and members of the committee quickly interrupted him.

Coughlin Backs Nazi War Plans

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of the sixth year of the economic crisis, oppressed and plundered by the master pirates of American capitalism, shamefully betrayed by both the Republican and Democratic parties, turn hopefully to the priest of the radio, to the movement he has organized as a possible way out of this hell of suffering and despair.

Coughlin Rise

Father Coughlin launched his National Union for Social Justice on Nov. 11, 1934, Justice Day. But he had previously acquired great influence among large sections of the population. His is easily the mightiest voice of the radio. In February, 1934, Fortune magazine estimated conservatively that his radio audience averages 10,000,000 people each Sunday. Today it is undoubtedly larger, with his potential radio audience placed at 60,000,000—nearly half the population of the country. The story of Father Coughlin's life—another American "success story"—is being emplaced in newspapers and magazines, from Big Business's most aristocratic organ, Fortune, which sells at \$1.00 a copy, to Bernard McFadden's five-cent Liberty magazine.

When the proposal for American adherence to the World Court was defeated in the U. S. Senate, the Detroit Times reported (Jan. 30, 1935) that fifteen Senators wired or telephoned congratulations to Father Coughlin. "Purely Confidential," a column of Washington comment by Paul Mallon, syndicated in newspapers throughout the country, declared on Feb. 1, 1935, that in the Congressional cloak-rooms Father Coughlin and Huey Long were being talked about as "the two biggest political leaders outside the White House."

Who is this man to whom fifteen Senators, including such prominent figures as Senators Borah and Hiram W. Johnson, think it important enough to send greetings? Who is this priest to whom thousands of the poor—the forgotten men—look as their leader and spokesman in the fight against capitalist oppression? What is the character of the movement he has launched? What is the truth about Father Coughlin?

Father Charles E. Coughlin is a product of the so-called depression, the greatest economic crisis in the history of capitalism. It is true he began broadcasting even earlier, in the summer of 1925, but undoubtedly he would have remained what he was during his first three years on the radio: one of hundreds of performers with nothing more than a local following, had not the capitalist crisis given him the opportunity to speak to millions. Significantly enough, it was almost simultaneously with the stock market crash that marked the beginning of the crisis that Father Coughlin took the first steps to expand his radio audience. For three years his sermons had been broadcast over only one station, WJR, Detroit, but in the fall of 1929 he purchased a hook-up with WMAQ of Chicago and WLW of Cincinnati.

"Throughout November and December of that year," writes his official biographer, Louis B. Ward, "he had not found himself. He was still groping." Finally, on January 12, 1930, Father Coughlin "found himself" and, incidentally, the national prominence that really launched him on his career.

One might expect that in the speech which won him the ear of the entire country, he would deliver a ringing challenge to the money-masters and come out as an unflinching fighter for the cause of the toiling masses. But this was not the case. Father Coughlin chose to devote his sermon to an attack on the only country where the workers and farmers had thrown off oppression, where they had established their own government, Soviet Russia.

Serves Reactionaries

That this proved a shock to many of his followers and admirers is evident from the statement of Mr. Ward that "unexpectedly, it [the sermon] drew hundreds of letters of condemnation." (Father Charles E. Coughlin, p. 58.)

It must be remembered that this came at a time when millions of workers all over the world were beginning to lose their faith in capitalism and turn hopefully to the example of the workers of Russia. Furthermore, in their hatred of the Soviet Union, the capitalist countries had launched a campaign of lies and slander about "Soviet dumping," "religious persecution," "forced labor," etc., in preparation for an armed attack. The Japanese imperialists had, in fact, already launched a military offensive against the Soviet border in September, 1929, and were "rarin'" to finish the job.

Did not Father Coughlin's sermon, therefore, play into the hands of the reactionary forces? He followed this sermon with one