

NEW YORK

Reveal Freeport Whitewasher Is In on Dewey 'Investigation'

By Claudia Jones

Something fishy in Governor Dewey's order to probe the Freeport killings of two Negroes is coming to light with the disclosure that the same Nassau County District Attorney who was responsible for the whitewash of the policeman killer arranged to probe with the governor.

The probe was ordered by Dewey last Friday, after nearly six months of pressure, when he appointed Lawrence S. Greenbaum, chairman of the State Social Welfare Board, as investigator. This is a signal victory for the Negro and white people of New York, for the New York Committee for Justice in Freeport and its more than 100 associate organizations and for the Communist Party and its press. The fight of these groups finally forced Dewey to act.

The kind of investigation which Dewey has in mind, apparently, is tipped off by two facts:

First, the story in the Freeport, L. I., *Newsday*, which revealed that District Attorney Gehrig asked for the investigation. The second is Gehrig's statement to Dewey, which appeared in *Newsday*, that:

"Many individuals and organizations have interested themselves in the Ferguson case. Nevertheless no additional evidence affecting the case has ever come to my attention; nor have any circumstances developed since the action of the Grand Jury which would be likely to change the results reached by that body."

Does this imply that the state-sponsored probe will be a bald attempt to take the heat off the state administration, Gov. Dewey himself and D. A. Gehrig?

The answer seems to be given out



GEHRIG

of Gehrig's own letter to Dewey when he wrote:

"Because a few organizations which have interested themselves in the case for a variety of motives have injected unfortunate racial implications into this matter, I believe it would be highly desirable to have competent and relevant testimony developed publicly."

What Gehrig means by the "unfortunate racial implications" is, of course, in reply to the Freeport

petitioners' charge of his alleged prejudice toward the Negro Ferguson brothers. This charge is backed by the common knowledge that the murder of the Ferguson brothers by Patrolman Romeika occurred primarily because of the Jimcrow discrimination which prevails in Freeport, Long Island, and elsewhere—because the Freeport anti-Negro police shoot first and ask questions afterward.

The case of William Dessaure, Negro lay preacher, beaten brutally by Rockville Center cops a few weeks ago, confirms this. The implications may be "unfortunate" for Mr. Gehrig and Gov. Dewey. Many citizens of New York State, however, realize that anti-Negro violence is in the interests only of the Ku Klux Klan, big business and pro-fascist forces, which seek to achieve their aims through disunity and violence against Negro, Jewish and other minority groups.

What "competent and relevant testimony" is evident in the Freeport case is certainly not contained in the Grand Jury minutes which whitewashed Romeika. This "competent and relevant testimony" has already been upset by the exoneration of Charles Ferguson by the Army Board of Investigation, of Joseph by the Navy and of Richard Ferguson by the County Court in Nassau.

Gehrig also added, referring to

"rumors" that the case served to revive the Ku Klux Klan: "I find no factual basis of any revival of the Ku Klux Klan in Nassau County." This, despite the fact that in April the Klan in New York State sent a threatening letter to Miss Dorothy Langston, executive secretary of the New York Committee for Justice in Freeport, and on April 12 boasted of its reorganization in Freeport. This—despite the fact that the governor received photostatic copies of the Klan threat and its incorporation under New York State laws. Gehrig may not "find" any factual basis, but New Yorkers know the revelation by a newspaperman that Horace A. Demarest, leading Republican and Queens Motor Vehicle Commissioner, was one of the original incorporators that so embarrassed the state administration that it was forced to fire him.

This all seems to tip-off the intended direction of the state-sponsored Dewey probe. To say this is not to imply that a people's victory has not been won. But now the people must be alert to see that the probe is:

- (1) Truly a public hearing.
 - (2) That the investigation proceeds rapidly and is reported out immediately.
 - (3) That no illusions should exist that the Ferguson case is over.
- It will only be over when Romeika is brought to justice and when lynch justice and the pro-fascist forces who stimulate it are fully exposed and crushed.