

Killer of Negro Boy Exposed

Shooting of Lloyd Hobbs Proved Unprovoked—Cops Whitewashed

By Cyril Briggs

In shocked silence, broken occasionally by angrily shouted demands for the punishment of the officially whitewashed police murders of Negroes, eight hundred persons attending the open hearing Saturday of the Mayor's Committee on Harlem at 447 West 151st Street, heard three eye-witnesses to the shooting of 16-year-old Lloyd Hobbs describe the killing as an absolutely unprovoked and cold-blooded murder by Mayor LaGuardia's police. Hobbs, a Negro high school boy, was shot down by Patrolman John G. McIniny, white, of the West 123rd Street precinct, on the night of March 19. The youth died ten days later in the Harlem Hospital. His death marked the third fatality of the vicious police terror with which the city government met the March 19 outbreak of hungry Harlem workers against jim-crow discrimination in relief and jobs.

Dodge Shields Cops

Refusing to permit the police killers to testify before the Mayor's Committee, District Attorney William C. Dodge threw a monkey wrench into the investigation which the committee has been conducting under pressure of the angry people of Harlem, rallying under the militant leadership of the Communist Party. Dodge's refusal to cooperate with the investigation was contained in a letter addressed to Hyman N. Glickstein, of 115 Broadway, counsel for the Mayor's Committee. The letter was read into the record by Arthur Garfield Hays, chairman at Saturday's hearing, with the comment: "I do not think the attitude of District Attorney Dodge is tenable and I think it will be withdrawn."

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Dodge all along has tried to cover up the responsibility of the city government for the March 19 outbreak behind a "Red scare" and indictments against Negro and white workers arrested that evening and subsequently.

Dodge informed the Mayor's Committee in his letter that he had written Police Commissioner Valentine that "under no circumstances" should any officer involved in the March 19 events be permitted to testify before the committee. He added:

"Likewise, the Assistant District Attorneys of my office will not give you any information concerning any matters which are now under consideration."

The murdered Hobbs boy was shot down without warning. Howard Malloy, Negro worker of 213 West 128th Street, and an eye-witness to the shooting, told the committee. Malloy testified that Patrolman McIniny did not call on the boy to halt, as the police now claim, but sighted his revolver deliberately at the back of the frightened, fleeing school boy. "He fired one shot, and the boy crumpled to the pavement. I turned to my friend and asked, 'Did you see that officer lose his head and shoot that kid?'"

Malloy's testimony was fully substantiated by his friend, Arthur Moore, who was with him at the time, and by Samuel Pitts, another eye-witness. Russell Hobbs, Lloyd's 15-year old brother, who had testified last Saturday, again told how he and his brother, frightened when they saw a police radio car dash up to where they were standing on 128th Street and 7th Avenue and Patrolman McIniny jump out with drawn gun, fled in different directions.

Parents Testify

The anger of those in the courtroom at 447 West 151st Street, reached a fever point when the dead boy's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Lawyer Hobbs, testified that upon their visit to Harlem Hospital in the early hours of March 20, they were denied access to their boy, attendants telling them he was a "criminal" and could not be seen without police permission. Finally taken to the boy, the father and mother both testified that his first words were:

'Mother, an officer shot me for nothing. I wasn't doing anything.'

Mrs. Hobbs testified further that Lloyd told her the police handled him brutally, throwing him into a radio car after shooting him, while one policeman sat on his stomach. When the boy protested that "you have shot me in the stomach and I am in great pain and now you sit on my stomach." Patrolman McIniny retorted, "I don't care."

At this point, angry voices shouting "Arrest the police killer!" sounded all over the courtroom.

An official report by the police on the shooting gave those in the courtroom a liberal education in police methods of whitewash. The report painted McIniny and a fellow policeman as heroes and the school boy as a dangerous "colored criminal."

Demands for the prosecution of the police killer of Lloyd were made by the murdered boy's father, Lawyer Hobbs, by Robert Minor, representing the League of Struggle for Negro Rights, by Joseph Tauber and Edward Kuntz, International Labor Defense attorneys, and by John Rodney, Negro attorney of a Harlem civic organization.

At another hearing before a subcommittee of the Mayor's Committee on the same day, Fred Benedict, representing the Unemployed Council of Lower Harlem, 109 West 113th Street, exposed the pestilential housing conditions and piratical high rents in Harlem. Under questioning by Benedict and other Harlem workers, Langdon W. Post, Tenement House Commissioner, admitted that the present housing plans of the city call for the maintenance of segregation, with its resultant high rents and disease-breeding conditions.

"There is no question that the housing situation in Harlem has created an emergency," the Commissioner stated. He admitted that the Negro workers are forced to pay "impossible rents," and said that a survey of the community showed Negroes paying more than 30 per cent of their income to the landlords. In a survey of a ten-block area, they were paying as high as 40 per cent of their income, he stated.

Justifies Jim-Crowism

Asked if present housing projects, financed or aided by the city, had the Negro population in view, he replied that the projects were in areas where no Negroes now live. He excused this jim-crow policy on the grounds that the projects were small and "necessarily confined" to the people in the neighborhood.