

Communists Had Key Role In Negro People's Struggle

By Claudia Jones

One of the favorite old reactionary myths that the Wall Street boys like to spread about the Communist Party and its leaders is that the 12 indicted Communists and our Party "use the Negro question" to advance their own aims. To the 14 million Negro Americans, whose every step to break second class citizenship bonds is met with Wall Street-backed force and violence by city and state officials South and North, this must seem a grim joke.

"Caution, oppressed Negroes," they say in effect. "Don't waste your vote for Henry Wallace and Progressive Party candidates. Waste it by having patience with the two old parties, who have done nothing to practice what they preach. It's only 80 years since you've been free, so what's another vote against jimcrow and war, to you who are yet to taste the full fruits of freedom?"

SCOTTSBORO

We Communists "hid behind" the Negro question so much that we helped unleash a mass cry to "free the Scottsboro boys" which was heard 'round the world. We led the fight that freed them. And we laid the basis for Negro and white baseball fans to cheer Doby, Paige, Robinson and Campanella!

When Hoover's depression stalked the land, Ben Davis renounced a potentially lucrative law practice to follow his Communist convictions. Ben Davis gave of his energy, brain and brawn from that day on to free Angelo Herndon from an "insurrection" charge because Herndon dared organize Negro and white unemployed workers in Georgia. Ben Davis so "hid behind" the Negro question that he was elected the first Negro Communist official in the United States with the votes of 60,000 Negro and white Americans.

Davis has continued to smoke out the Southern lynchers, poll taxers and Northern dixie-crats ever since.

Dewey—Hoover's protege, or Truman—Pendergast's protege, cannot be found in the legends of the struggles of the people of that day, no more than they can be found now.

Meanwhile, led by men like Eugene Dennis, Negro and white unemployed struggles led to the unemployment insurance laws now on the statute books. But Dewey and Truman were hiding too far back in the closets of the Wall Street conspirators who today plot against the freedom of the Communists, trade unionists and other progressives. Now they cite Eugene Dennis, general secretary of the Communist Party for contempt

—they are to railroad him to jail because he first dared to refuse to dignify Rankin's presence on the Un-American Committee as anything other than a violation of the 14th Amendment to the Constitution.

BARED PLOTTERS

Sure, the Communists were advocating and urging outlawing of the jimcrow lynch system of Wall Street. We were publishing books, pamphlets and, through our press, the Daily and Sunday Worker, we crusaded for Negro freedom, Negro white unity, for FEPC for over 29 years.

And we routed from their hiding places, in Wall Street, the real conspirators against democratic liberties, whose monopoly wealth props up the semi-feudal Black Belt, where over nine million Negroes and poor whites live under deep shadows of mob violence, poll tax justice, lynch terror and sharecropping. We exposed its Northern fruit—police brutality; its cost to Willie Milton, Communist. Its cost to Northern Negro families who live in jimcrow rat infested death-giving conditions in Harlem, South Side, Bedford-Stuyvesant.

It is the Wall Street boys who lie in their cups. They hide behind the easy slogan of "welfare of all" while denying 14 million Negro citizens their sovereign rights as Negro citizens. It is they who seek to hide Negro oppression from the white glare of world democratic opinion, the hypocrisy of the "democratic preachments" of American imperialism, while in its own backyard, 14 million walk in fear because of denial of enforcement of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. As the saying goes: They shout so loud, you can't hear what they're saying.

It was William Z. Foster, chairman of the Communist Party, a native leader of American working-class origin, whose life is itself a symbol of the creative ability and growth of the American working class, who became the foremost Marxist and leader of our Party. His over 40 years of service to the working class, and above all, his Communist leadership, have helped change the whole political climate on the

Negro question in this nation. He demonstrates the ability of the American working class to play its leading role in the struggle for full liberation of the Negro people.

Such struggles inspired Henry Winston to become a young Communist in his early teens and to later rise to the third highest post in the Communist Party of the United States.

And where was Henry Winston, indicted administrative secretary of the C. P. when Tom Dewey was daydreaming of a certain House on Pennsylvania avenue; (and under his second term of governor deporting Negroes to southern states) and perhaps contemplating how not to indict the "trigger happy cop murderer of the Freeport Ferguson brothers—two of whom were American soldiers?

Henry Winston, in a jimcrow army, was using force and violence against the white supremacists of Hitler Germany and the Axis powers, whom Dewey-Truman and their Wall Street parties seek to emulate today.

Two of our people's most worthy sons, Ben Davis and Henry Winston, have a price on their heads but, like Frederick Douglass, they will not be deterred or silenced from thinking, advocating or doing either, everything they can for full equality for the Negro people. Nor will their co-workers.

Not only Hitler but Jefferson Davis failed to realize his vaunted dream of spreading slavery. Not only Hitler but Rankin and the Thomas Un-American committee will fail in their attempt to outlaw the C.P., if the historic, anti-imperialist and anti-fascist sentiments of the Negro people are brought to bear fully in alliance with the trade unions in this struggle for smashing the frame-up Wall Street indictments of the Communist leaders.

Let the Negro people, who thereby also learn from their jimcrow status that the Communist Party's immediate and future socialist aims are their own, join the Party of the Negro people and the American working class—the Party of Ben Davis and Henry Winston.