

Monday, January 22, 1939

Dies Group Assailed as Foe Of Negro People; National Leader Urges End of 'Probe'

John P. Davis, Head of Negro Congress Asks Congress Not to Give 'Single Dime' to Committee; Exposes Fascist Base

(Special to the Daily Worker)

WASHINGTON, D. C., Jan. 29.—John P. Davis, national executive secretary of the National Negro Congress, yesterday assailed the Dies Committee as an enemy of the Negro people and urged Congress not "to appropriate a single dime to continue this committee which has shown such an utter disregard of the truth."

The blistering statement of the young Negro leader was contained in a ten - page letter to Speaker of the House William B. Bankhead answering Dies vicious red-baiting attack on the Negro Congress made in the latter's report to the House.

BARES ANTI-NEGRO STAND

Davis revealed that behind the attacks on the National Negro Congress, were Dies' fascist opposition to anti-lynching legislation and his open support to the disfranchisement of the Negro people in Texas.

Davis pointed out that the basis of the Dies Committee's attacks was the testimony of one Walter S. Steele, a representative of the National Republic and the Chairman of the National American Coalition Committee on National Security, both of which are fascist groups as un-American as the Dies Committee itself.

"At no time was any official of the National Negro Congress given the opportunity to affirm or deny the charges made in the hidden testimony of Mr. Steele," Davis's letter asserted, "It therefore had no opportunity to defend itself against the base and malicious testimony submitted privately to the Committee."

Davis tripped up the Committee in a number of lies, as for instance the claim of a Dies investigator that Max Yergan, vice-president of the National Negro Congress, and instructor at the College of the City of New York was an "alien." Actually Yergan is an American born in Raleigh, North Carolina, an outstanding Negro leader and an authority on African Affairs, Davis showed.

PUTS DIES ON SPOT

Putting the Dies un-American Committee on the spot further, Davis asked:

"If the Committee were sincere in its attempt to ferret out un-American activities, why did it not investigate the Ku Klux Klan, lynchings, mob violence and organized mobs in Texas? Why did it not investigate the un-American conspiracy in the South to disfranchise free - born Negro American citizens?"

Scoring Dies himself, the letter went on:

Mr. Dies came from a state where



JOHN P. DAVIS

Negroes are barred from participation in the primaries of the Democratic Party. Of the 304,279 persons (all figures from 1930 census) in his district, 24.3 per cent or 74,184 are Negro. In 1930 Negroes of voting age numbered 40,923. These Negro citizens have never had the opportunity to exercise any effective franchise in Mr. Dies' district."

Mr. Dies has been "one of a group of reactionary leaders in control of the Democratic Party of Texas who have persistently sought to deny Negro citizens their constitutional American right of franchise," the letter continued.

EXPOSES FALSE TESTIMONY

Exposing other false testimony of the fascist witness Steele, Davis' letter said:

"This witness condemns the National Negro Congress because its resolutions have condemned the aggressive acts of Italy, Germany, Japan and the Franco rebels in Spain. In this matter our resolutions spoke only the feeling of millions of black Americans at the rape

of Ethiopia, at the brutal attacks against democracy made by these aggressor nations. The witness deliberately avoided declaring that our resolutions covering the subject went on record in support of the Chicago speech of President Roosevelt; and, in support of the Kellogg-Briand Pact and the Nine Power Treaty; representing the established international policy of the United States of America."

"This witness condemns us because we declared ourselves vigorously in support of the CIO, industrial unionism, and freedom for the Scottsboro Boys. Is it un-American to support the efforts of more than four million organized workers in the CIO?"

"Is it un-American to seek freedom for nine innocent Negro boys who, according to well-known decisions of the United States Supreme Court, have twice been denied a fair trial in conformity with the provisions of our Constitution?"

SEES THREAT TO DEMOCRACY

The letter goes on:

"The continuation of the life of such a committee a single day will serve to threaten justice and democracy in America. In the name of millions of Negro people, the National Negro Congress calls on the Congress of the United States to refuse to appropriate a single dime to continue this committee which has shown such an utter disregard of truth. We urge that the money of American taxpayers, Negro and white, not be voted out to enable the Dies Committee to carry on legal pogroms against the Negro people, to incite racial hatred and un-American bigotry in our democracy."

The letter to Speaker Bankhead ends:

"We pledge to you the fullest efforts of the National Negro Congress to support every letter of the American Constitution (including the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments), to support, as the Negro people have always done since the beginning of our nation, the American democracy."