

# Dies to Defend Witness Held For Murder

## Curran Praises NMU for Performing Public Duty In Exposing McCuiston

By Adam Lapin

(Daily Worker Washington Bureau)

WASHINGTON, D. C., Nov. 1.—Rep. Martin Dies today in effect took over the job of defense counsel for William C. McCuiston—goon squad leader who is wanted by New Orleans police in connection with the murder of a National Maritime Union leader.

In one of the most amazing moves he has yet made in his whole spectacular witch-hunt, Dies announced that he would go to New Orleans personally to look into the charges against McCuiston.

During the last few days, Dies and the other members of the committee have painted McCuiston as the innocent victim of a "frame-up" and of "persecution" by the N.M.U.

One step which the committee took today was to have the Washington police, who are holding McCuiston, take him to the Department of Justice so that he could tell his story about alleged attempts of the N.M.U. and the Communists to deny this anti-labor strong-arm specialist his civil liberties.

Accompanied by police officials and by committee counsel Rhea C. Whitley, McCuiston strutted his stuff before Henry C. Schweinhaut, head of the Civil Liberties Unit of the Department.

Dies' trip to New Orleans came as the climax to this series of at-

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tempts by the committee to shield and defend McCuiston.

"I want to satisfy myself that this is not a frame-up," Dies declared.

This move came as a striking illustration of the close ties which have developed between the Dies committee and the group of steamship company stool-pigeons who were recently expelled from the N.M.U. McCuiston is a leading member of this group.

Apparently not satisfied that regular police authorities will be able to handle the case against McCuiston and give McCuiston a clean bill of health, Dies has decided to intervene personally. He will visit New Orleans next week on his way home to Orange, Texas.

N.M.U. members in New Orleans swore out a warrant to the effect that McCuiston was the leader of the goon squad which killed Philip Carey, secretary of the Steward's Division of the N.M.U., on the Gulf Coast on Sept. 17.

Meanwhile Joseph Curran, president of the N.M.U., indicated in a statement issued here that Dies was not acting in the public interest in attacking the union for attempting to have McCuiston arrested.

### SAYS N. Y. POLICE WANTED FUGITIVE

"The N.M.U. and I, as president, would be remiss in our duty if we did not aid in every possible way in the apprehension of those responsible for the murder," Curran said.

"Instead of being condemned, the N.M.U. should be commended for assisting in the apprehension of a fugitive. For a committee to attack the union for assisting in the apprehension of a man wanted for murder is, to say the least, not in the best public interest."

Curran flatly disputed a statement by Dies to the effect that the NMU had not made an attempt to have McCuiston apprehended until he appeared before the Dies committee.

"The police in New Orleans, as the newspapers show, had notified many cities that this man was wanted," Curran said.

"Also the Homicide Bureau in New York City was told. Captain Mullins of the New York Homicide Bureau stated that he would furnish you with any data you may desire regarding the request for McCuiston's arrest."

The NMU added that the union had offered a \$1,000 reward for information leading to the conviction of the murderer of 27-year-old Philip Carey.

### NMU UPHOLDS CIVIL RIGHTS

Disputing charges by Dies that the NMU had interfered with the civil liberties of the goon squad leader, Curran said:

"We have no desire to be a party to the violation of civil rights of any individual. We do not believe that your committee is justified in suggesting that we have failed in that respect.

"We are prepared to bend every effort to insure the protection and advancement of civil rights. We as Americans certainly want to expose and root out those who would attempt to undermine the democratic institutions of this country."

Curran said that "McCuiston was one of an organized gang who travelled through the various ports in the Gulf area and was responsible for the beating, intimidation and injury of many seamen.

"This activity culminated in the murder of a rank and file seaman, John Synchron on June 28, Galveston, and the vicious beating and murder of 27-year-old Philip Carey."

The committee hearing this morning was devoted to more melodrama staged for the purpose of creating public sympathy for the man accused of murdering Carey.

Dies put on the stand Mrs. Dolly M. Crawford, McCuiston's mother, who attempted to smear Curran with hair-raising tales about detailed plans for the "revolution" which he allegedly revealed to her one morning over breakfast in her home at Frederick, Md.

### CURRAN DENIES CHARGE

Curran denied ever having been in her Frederick home or having made any of the statements credited to him.

McCuiston himself followed on the witness stand and he continued to smear various leaders of the NMU as well as the veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade whom he deserted when he was in Spain.

Here is one example of the type of testimony which the committee encouraged.

At one point Mrs. Crawford said that Curran had used the word "we" in describing an alleged attempt to take over the government. "What did Joe Curran mean when he said we?" Rep. J. Parnell Thomas of New Jersey asked.

"Oh, the Communist Party definitely," Mrs. Crawford said.