

INTRODUCTION

THE trial of August Yokinen before 1,500 white and Negro workers in Harlem for acts clearly based on race prejudice was an event without example in the history of the American Labor movement. He was not tried before any court of American ruling-class "justice." He was tried by a court of workers. He was brought to trial by the Communist Party for conduct detrimental to the interests of the working class as a whole and for violation of the fundamental program of the Party.

It was a workers' jury which convicted him. And the workers throughout the country, who already understood the vicious anti-labor nature of race prejudice, together with those who were led to a clear understanding of it through this trial, acclaimed the verdict of "guilty" and approved of the tasks set for Yokinen to do before he could again apply for re-admission to the Party.

The meaning of the guilt of Yokinen, the seriousness of the crime he committed against the working class is made clear in this pamphlet. Yokinen was guilty of upholding by his sentiments and his acts, the ideology of "white superiority" which serves as a ruling-class excuse for the acts of suppression and persecution of the Negro workers and farmers. He was guilty of permitting lynch law, in its less brutal but just as vicious form, take its course. In acting thus, he permitted himself to become an instrument of the ruling class. For it is this wall of race prejudice by which the bosses in the factories, the landlords on the farm, keep the workers and farmers divided.

By this trial, the Communist Party, has done two things. First, it has made clear the anti-workingclass character of race prejudice. Second, it has shown that it will not

tolerate any form of race prejudice within its own ranks, and will fight tooth and nail to root it out of the working class as a whole.

Yokinen acknowledged his errors and pledged himself to carry on untiring activity against all forms of race prejudice. As a foreign-born worker, he realized that he too was being divided off by the ruling class from the other white workers, in the same way as the workers were being divided on race lines. He really understood his crime.

So did the ruling class. While ruling-class justice has its Jim-Crow laws, aids in actual lynching parties, leaves lynchings go by unpunished, it reserves its prisons for fighters for working-class solidarity. After Yokinen had seen his errors before a working-class court and decided to energetically correct his mistakes by taking up an active fight for full Negro equality as a member of the League of Struggle for Negro Rights, the "laws" of the bosses jumped into action, arrested Yokinen and held him for deportation to Finland, where prison or death awaits a Communist.

Yokinen now represents the very thing which he injured. He has now joined the struggle for full equality and for the unity of the workers. The ruling class answers the threat of deportation. The workers' answer must be greater solidarity and greater fighting unity among the toilers of all colors and nationalities, against deportations, against all persecutions of the Negroes, and against the capitalist system which maintains itself by such institutions.

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