

Army's Exoneration of Slain Negro Puts Ferguson Case Up to Dewey

By CLAUDIA JONES

The fight to bring to justice the killer of the 27-year-old Negro vet, Charles Ferguson, shot down in cold blood by a cop in Freeport Long Island, Feb. 5, moved forward yesterday with the Army's complete exoneration of the dead soldier. This campaign, in which the Daily Worker and the Communist Party took an active part from the moment that indignant citizens began a protest movement, was spurred to demand that Governor Dewey act to bring the killer cop, Joseph Romeika to justice.

TEXT OF WIRE TO DEWEY

16 APRIL 1946

GOVERNOR THOMAS E. DEWEY
ALBANY NEW YORK

MONDAY U.S. ARMY ADJUTANT-GENERAL'S OFFICE HANDED DOWN DECISION THAT PFC. CHARLES FERGUSON WAS KILLED "IN LINE OF DUTY." THIS CLEARS NAME OF SOLDIER SHOT BY PATROLMAN JOSEPH ROMEIKA OF FREEPORT, L. I., ON FEB. 5. THIS DEVELOPMENT MAKES IMPERATIVE YOU MEET PERSONALLY WITH REPRESENTATIVE DELEGATION OF NEW YORK CITIZENS AS PRELIMINARY TO STATE INVESTIGATION OF WHOLE CASE. ACTION OF WAR DEPARTMENT FOLLOWS SIMILAR ACTION CLEARING FERGUSON BROTHERS OF ANY CHARGES OF DISORDERLY CONDUCT BY NAVY AND NASSAU COUNTY COURT AUTHORITIES. COMMON DECENCY AND GOOD FAITH DEMANDS THAT YOU SUPERSEDE THE NASSAU COUNTY GRAND JURY WHITEWASH OF PATROLMAN ROMEIKA AND THAT YOU IMPANEL A NEW GRAND JURY TO INVESTIGATE THE LYNCH LIKE MURDER OF NEGRO CITIZENS AND BRING PATROLMAN ROMEIKA TO JUSTICE. CASE OF FERGUSON BROTHERS IS A BLOT ON THE RECORD OF NEW YORK STATE. URGE YOU GRANT APPOINTMENT WITH THE NEW YORK COMMITTEE FOR JUSTICE IN FREEPORT IMMEDIATELY.

DAILY WORKER

The Army's investigation announced that Ferguson was innocent of any misconduct. It voted to give his widow the pension due all survivors of men who "died in the line of duty." This decision shatters all the pretenses that Ferguson and his brothers, Alfonzo, also killed, and Joseph, wounded, were guilty of any misconduct justifying the attack upon them as claimed by the police officer and upheld by the Nassau County grand jury in a whitewash.

The Daily Worker yesterday wired to Governor Dewey bringing to his attention the Army's exoneration of the police officer's victims, and urged that he meet immediately with the delegations of the New York Committee for Justice in Freeport. He has thus far refused to meet them.

The Communists played a key role in achieving these victories. The Daily and Sunday Worker played an outstanding role. Harry Raymond, ace Daily reporter did a "duty of love" flowing from the convictions which govern us that we are against Jimcrow in any form and from any quarter.

To mention this, is another way of pointing out that not everyone felt that way that fateful Feb. 5 when word came that four Negro brothers were the victims of false imprisonment, murder and death—27 miles away from the greatest metropolitan city in the world. There was virtual silence clamped on the bourgeois press. Their attitude was: "Well — we do not know all the facts . . . 'didn't they have a gun' maybe — the cop was only performing in the line of duty, ad infinitum."

Today, the 40,000 petitioners, the people throughout this nation who support the actions of labor, civic relations Negro peoples organizations are fighting to weld their unity.

They act because they recognize that the lynchlike murder of Charles Ferguson and his brothers symbolize the Jimcrow discriminatory, segregated pattern suffered by Negro citizens. They recognize its kinship to the "Aryan supremacy" doctrines of Hitler against which an entire world battled for four years.

In a word then, the key lesson of the Ferguson case thus far, is: mass struggle. It is this mass struggle that won these victories; it is this too that can force official action to repudiate lynch law and to bring full punishment to the Romeikas and other lynchers of Negro citizens. (Continued on Back Page)

Army Clears Slain Negro, Dewey Action Demanded

(Continued from Page 1)

Continued failure by Governor Dewey to grant an appointment to the N. Y. Committee for Justice in Freeport was scored yesterday by Miss Dorothy Langston, executive secretary. Miss Langston quoted a telephone conversation was held yesterday with Charles B. Breitell, counsel to Governor Dewey. Breitell said, according to Ml.: Langston, that "Gov. Dewey would be occupied for the next 30 days passing on some 1065 bills and that no appointments would be made for any delegations."

Miss Langston also said that Breitell irritably complained that "less fanfare and no delegations" would be much better for the case.

In a statement issued by the N. Y. Committee for Justice in Freeport, Miss Langston, executive secretary, declared:

"The official action taken by the Army and Navy and the court decisions prove more than ever that the cold-blooded, quick-triggered action of Patrolman Romeika was the hateful result of rank prejudice which has no place in our state.

"A special prosecutor in his investigation will find that the true facts in this case will warrant another Grand Jury probe.

"The New York Committee for Justice in Freeport urges the people of New York to flood Governor Dewey's office with telegrams, let-

WILL GOV. DEWEY ACT?

THE clearing of Charles Ferguson by the army authorities is a major victory for this "Scottsboro case" in the North.

It is a tribute to the mass struggle of New Yorkers, led by the Communist Party and its press, the Daily Worker and The Worker.

It is a tribute to every trade unionist, civic, religious leader who had the vision to see that support to this case meant to fight without quarter the Jimcrow pattern of Freeport, L. I.; the devastation of Columbia, Tenn., by the would-be native Gestapos of American fascism.

It throws into the open the need for a tumultuous demand of New Yorkers that the governor of this state—Thomas E. Dewey—reopen this case, supersede the white-wash grand jury trial of patrolman Romeika by impaneling a new grand jury and bringing Romeika to trial.

Governor Dewey has not acted thus far either on the revelations of the Freeport crime or of the rising activities of the KKK in New York. Public protest must insist on action in Albany.

New Yorkers who have helped win this first stage in the fight to bring the killer of innocent Negro vets to justice can help by urging Walter Hart, chairman of the City Council Rules Committee, to report Councilman Ben Davis' resolution No. 66. The resolution urges Gov. Dewey to impanel a new grand jury to bring Romeika to justice. Act now.

ters, postcards and resolutions demanding that he supersede the District Attorney and immediately institute a special investigation by grand jury or otherwise in the interest of justice in this case."