

Un-American Committee And the Negro People

By Claudia Jones

(Second of Three Articles)

IT IS MORE THAN a passing coincidence that at the Un-American Committee loyalty hearings on "Communism and the Negro" the Negro reformist leaders — such as Lester Granger, Charles S. Johnson (to say nothing of the miserable stoolpigeons such as Manning Johnson) were not powerful enough, or convincing enough in their views on this subject. This, despite the American bourgeoisie's all-out efforts to control the Negro press, through ads, or to meagerly give crumbs from its profit-laden tables for the support of such institutions as the reformists may lead.

The ever-present virus of "white supremacy," intensified national oppression, and second class citizenship, plus intellectual integrity compelled Rev. Sandy Ray, one of the leading Negro religious leaders, the chairman of the Social Service Commission of the National Baptist Convention, to boldly declare, without apology, of the Jimcrow lynch system in the United States:

"We do, however, seek to overthrow an intangible empire which exists within our government and many of our institutions throughout the land. It is that empire which shelters injustice, oppressions, exploitation, segregation, discrimination, ill-will and all of the inconsistencies which make for separation, tension and strife. It is against that empire that we wage our war. It is that empire that must be subdued if we are to have domestic peace and give effective leadership in world chaos."

INDEED, the House Un-Americans, American monopoly capital and the Southern landlords needed still a fresh voice to do their dirty work of disunity among the Negro people, whose just grievances they fear, and whose Jimcrow status haunts their every hypocritical declaration of civil rights at home and around the globe.

Thus, they selected Jackie Robinson, a man who has become a symbol of fair play and sportsmanship in the nation's national pastime — baseball — a man who broke Jimcrow's chains with the full weight of the left — in American politics — led by the Communist Party, which pioneered in the fight and who has not ceased to fight Jimcrow in baseball and every phase of American life.

The "grand designs" of the Un-Americans was to wheedle Jackie Robinson, the Dodger baseball star, into a position of appearing as a disunity force

among the Negro people themselves. What was old in the tactic was the imperialist "divide-and-rule" adage. What was new was the further development of the Truman policy on the domestic and international scene, to use Negroes to help rescue the ever-growing vulnerable position of American imperialist policy, that it is "saving the world for democracy," while, in its own back yard, millions of citizens of darker hue are enslaved, lynched, terrorized as daily occurrences in ghettos throughout North and South.

Truman's "bold new program for Africa" must necessarily have a "bold new approach" among certain Negro leaders at home for its success. Reliance then, on the old type Negro reformists, who are under increasing criticism among the Negro people themselves must be bolstered by new fresh young voices, who are all the more to be selected if their own lives represent a "typical" American success story — that is, of course, for Negro Americans!

THAT Jackie Robinson allowed himself to become such a tool is more than regrettable. In an interview in a metropolitan paper, he declared, after testifying, that he had the help of Lester Granger, Dan Dodson (of the Mayor's Committee on Unity) and Branch Rickey, in making his decision. He ignored numerous plain people — fans — and organizations such as the NAACP and the Baltimore Afro-American, which asked him to spurn with contempt, the Un-Americans.

He played ball with the Un-Americans whose polltax chairman, Wood, conveniently absented himself from the hearing, after the task was accomplished of getting a Negro to attempt to refute another. Thus they obscured the real responsibility of government for the failure to pass legislation for FEPC, anti-lynching and anti-polltax, etc.

It was hardly befitting one, who is not, by his own claim, "an expert on world affairs," to dismiss as "silly" — views (which were misquoted in the first place). But the real views of Robeson are heard from the lips of Negro veterans, who like the Negro people as a whole, fought

in the anti-fascist war for a "double victory" against fascism abroad and Jimcrow white supremacy at home. These masses, the flower of the Negro people, its young men and women, certainly will want an accounting of those who deny equality at home, but who ask them — and all white Americans — to serve in a Jimcrow army to help establish a Jimcrow world in an imperialist war! Clearly then, the net effect of Robinson's playing ball with the Ku Kluxers of the Un-American Committee was to help them against his own people, the Negro people, his country — and himself.

IT IS IMPORTANT to register that, despite his falling into the trap set for him, Jackie Robinson did not completely satisfy the Un-Americans or their Big Business bosses. Even the "peans of praise" from reactionary columnists cannot hide their chagrin that Robinson came short of meeting the old adage they sing to "successful Negroes" namely: "why worry about the plight of the mass of the Negro people?"

These reactionaries, don't, of course, know that the basic tie of leaders to the masses from Douglass to Robeson is that the Negro people revere those who never forget whence they spring!

As a Negro, a veteran, then, one whose rise to prominence was born out of the struggle against Jimcrow, Robinson reminded the Committee that any Negro worth his salt is against Jimcrow and discrimination of all sorts.

It is not at all surprising that Robinson holds different views of the ultimate perspectives for Negro liberation with which he is undoubtedly concerned. Such views are part of the many class outlooks and influences at work among various strata of the Negro people. Here, as among all peoples, one's social consciousness is determined by one's condition of life, and, not the other way around.

The most advanced views on Negro liberation are those held by the Communist Party and by the Negro Communist leaders in the Negro liberation movement. The Marxist-Leninist leadership

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and views of Benjamin Davis and Henry Winston have influenced all strata of the Negro people.

The leadership of Paul Robeson and his views represent and reflect the growing ferment of advanced thought and militancy among all sections of the Negro people. Robeson's years of experience and leadership, has, as a result, earned for him, a place not only among the left, but among wide sections of the people—labor, the Negro people, all nationalities, in this country and throughout the globe.

How then, could Jackie Robinson air the truth (which even anti-Communists are forced to admit), namely the Communist Party's contribution to the economic, political and social equality of the Negro people—and yet fall into the trap of red-baiting and slander—the net result of which was to repeat the social-democratic lie that Communists “use the Negro question for their own ends?”

(To be concluded tomorrow)