

West Coast Negro Family Burned To Death After Vigilante Threats

Mother, 2 Children Dead In Blaze Of Suspicious Origin

By Jean Simon
(Special To The Militant)

LOS ANGELES, Dec. 21—Two weeks after a vigilante threat of violence to O'Day H. Short if he didn't vacate his property at Fontana, 50 miles from here, a fire of unexplained origin completely destroyed his home and burned his wife and two children to death. Short himself is so seriously injured that it is not yet certain he will live.

The case has already focused state-wide attention on the segregation of Negroes and official cooperation with vigilante racial terror that exists in Fontana.

Short, a Los Angeles man prevented by race restrictions from finding a home in Los Angeles, bought property in Fontana and proceeded to build a home for himself and his wife and two children.

REPORTED THREATS

After he had moved his family into the partially completed house, he was visited by local real estate dealer J. Sutherland and the former owner of the land, Louis Hefman, who delivered the threat from the vigilante committee on December 3. Short reported these facts to The Sentinel, Los Angeles Negro weekly, the next day.

According to the sheriff's own report, Deputy Cornelison and Deputy Glines had told Short "that he was out of his bounds and advised him that he contact the colored Chamber of Commerce and get together with the white Chamber of Commerce and see if a lot of disagreeableness could not be prevented."

Short told The Sentinel that the first indication he had of opposition to his presence was a visit from the deputy sheriff, who informed him that objections to his presence had been expressed and that an agreement between the Fontana Chamber of Commerce and prominent Negroes in the community provided that Negroes should live only in the Baseline district.

REPORTER'S FINDINGS

Fontana police claimed that according to Short the explosion occurred when he was filling a coal oil lamp.

I visited the scene of the fire three days after the event, examined the ruins and the lamp supposed to have caused the explosion. I interviewed the colored Chamber of Commerce committee and a number of Negro workers in the area.

Universal feeling both in Fontana and Los Angeles is that the fire was the result of vigilante action and "law enforcement" agencies are making every effort to whitewash the whole affair. Everyone I spoke to

wanted to know who the vigilantes were who had openly threatened Short through Sutherland, and why the police had failed to take action against them instead of warning Short.

I examined the lamp in the office of the Tri-County Bulletin, local Negro weekly in the Fontana area. No one can explain how that lamp could have caused such a serious explosion yet remained almost intact except for the burned glass.

VIOLENCE THREAT

The committee of the colored Chamber of Commerce led by John Lee, local president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, stated indignantly that they had absolutely no agreement, written or oral, with the white Chamber of Commerce to segregate Negroes. Local Negroes have been fighting such segregation.

In his report to The Sentinel on December 4, Short quoted Sutherland as stating to him, "Mr. Short, I don't mean to frighten you or insult you, but the vigilante committee had a meeting on your case last night, and they are a tough bunch to deal with. If I were you, I'd get my family off of this property at once."

Short then asked if physical violence would result if he didn't and was told, "Yes."

OPPOSE WHITESHASH

Aroused by the violence in Fontana, numerous individuals and organizations proceeded to investigate the situation this week.

Attorney Thomas L. Griffith, president of the Los Angeles Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, called a meeting of all interested parties Thursday night, December 20, to collect information and plan further action.

Myra Tanner Weiss, Los Angeles organizer of the Socialist Workers Party, proposed at that meeting the establishment of a broad committee of inquiry to combat any attempt to whitewash the vigilante terror in the Short case, and to mobilize mass

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Wall Street Plunges Deeper Into Far East Colonial War

By Charles Carsten

The colonial peoples of the Far East continue their valiant fight for freedom from imperialist oppression. Arrayed against them are imperialist troops armed with the most modern equipment, supported by airplanes, tanks and long-range battleship guns. The people's armies, fighting with only rifles and spears, are supported by colonial masses who prefer death to enslavement.

The British command in Singapore recently announced its decision to "use a strong hand in Java." As if their burning of villages and bombing civilians were not "strong" enough!

British artillery from both warships and land batteries are pounding the Japanese. "Royal Air Force Mosquito and Thunderbolt aircraft carrying rockets and 500 pounds bombs" blasted nationalist positions according to a December 21 Reuter dispatch.

IMPERIALISTS FEARFUL

Britain is determined to avoid giving the impression of yielding to native forces. British imperialists are afraid this might inspire nationalist revolutions in their farflung empire. They fear that any signs of compromise in Indonesia might be the signal for an all out struggle by the starving, disease-ridden, masses of India.

Fear of colonial peoples and of the mounting indignation of people throughout the world against the brazen violation of the "principles" for which Roosevelt and Churchill said the war was fought, has caused the imperialists to screw the lid down even more tightly on news from the Far East. The little leaking through the tight censorship and coming from people who have returned from the embattled countries, indicate that the people, fighting against tremendous odds, are determined

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FORD UNION GROUP FLAYS SCHEME TO FINE STRIKERS

All Cleveland Labor Rallies To GM Strike

SPECIAL TO THE MILITANT

CLEVELAND, Dec. 17 — More than 1,000 CIO members and friends braved zero weather on Sunday night, December 16, to attend a rally here in support of the General Motors strikers. Held at the Public Music Hall by the Cleveland Industrial Union Council, the meeting was the opening gun in a campaign to mobilize the entire resources of the Cleveland CIO movement of 125,000 members for the embattled GM and Murray-Ohio strikers, and impending strikes in steel, etc. A relief fund of \$100,000 was set as the goal of the drive.

Speakers at the meeting included CIO United Auto Workers President R. J. Thomas and CIO Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers President Albert Fitzgerald. All leaders made militant speeches, attempting to match the fighting mood of the rank and file.

WONDERFUL SOLIDARITY

Referring to Truman's proposal that GM strikers go back to work pending the deliberations of a "fact-finding" committee, R. J. Thomas said, "Frankly, I hope to drop dead if I should tell GM workers to go back to work in a situation like this." UE President Fitzgerald stated that "UE workers will soon be on the picket lines with the GM workers." This promise was greeted with prolonged applause. William Donovan, Regional Director of the CIO United Steel workers, brought the house down when he said, "What labor needs is a fact finding committee to investigate President Truman."

The meeting responded to a

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CIO Rubber Workers Convention Witnesses Fight For Leadership

By Milton Genecin

(Special To The Militant)

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich., Dec. 18 — The CIO United Rubber Workers witnessed a pitched battle for leadership at its tenth annual convention held here this week. On one side stood the progressive, militant section of the union, spearheaded by the Akron locals, and on the other a Stalinist machine headed by National Organizational Director Harry Eagle and his staff of paid organizers plus some of the small local unions.

Issues and program took a secondary place to the main question of leadership of the International union. All sections of the union support the 7-point wage and hour program which calls for a 30-cent an hour increase and a basic six-hour day and 30-hour week. In contrast to previous conventions, this year's produced no differences of opinion on policy or program.

The balance of power among the delegates was held by President Buckmaster whose middle-of-the-road position was supported by large sections of the

3,000 NEW YORK WORKERS PICKET AT GM BUILDING

By Bill Morgan

NEW YORK, Dec. 20 — Singing "Solidarity Forever!" more than 3,000 CIO United Auto Workers, members and sympathetic workers marched four abreast around the huge General Motors Building at 1775 Broadway this evening in an inspiring picket line organized by the Greater New York CIO Council.

As darkness gathered, a battery of giant klieg lamps played bright streams of light over the marching thousands, and from three sound trucks, union songs resounded militantly in the sharp cold city streets.

AFL members joined with CIO members on the line. Delegations from 24 international unions came carrying their union banners. Veterans of the army, navy and merchant marine mingled with Flying Squadrons from Ford's at Edgewater, N. J., and other near-by auto plants. A

Press Steel Unit Meeting Denounces Vicious Proposals

By Roy Weston

(Special To The Militant)

DETROIT, Dec. 17. — The regular monthly mass meeting of the large Press Steel Unit of Ford Local 600, CIO United Automobile Workers, on December 15, unanimously adopted a resolution denouncing the treacherous company security

plan offered the Ford Motor Company by the top officials of the union's Ford Department. Some 1,200 workers attended the meeting in Western High School.

This resolution, introduced by David Averill, Three-Year Trustee of the Press Steel Unit, blasted the National Ford Negotiating Committee, which for more than a month has been involved in futile negotiations with the agents of the Ford Empire.

The company security plan presented by the union's bargaining committee was the "counter-proposal" to the company's arrogant demand that the union should allow the company to discharge any "instigator" of a "wild-cat" strike and that any worker participating in an "unauthorized" work-stoppage or slowdown should be fined \$5 per day for the duration of the strike or slowdown, with the fines to be paid from the union's treasury.

On Tuesday, December 18, some 2,000 UAW pickets and flying squad members from Bulck, Fisher Body, AC and Chevrolet locals formed a picket line at AC plant a quarter of a mile long. This was the strikers' answer to police clubbing of several workers the day before, when the cops forcibly opened the picket lines for the frightened office workers who, either duped or afraid that they would lose their jobs, had

accepted the company security plan offered by the UAW leaders differed from Bugas' proposal only

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IN THE NEWS

Not Fussy Servants

LONDON, Dec. 19 — King George VI waltzed with his butler's wife last night, and Queen Elizabeth did a turn with her footman. Princess Elizabeth danced with a chef from the palace kitchen. It was the annual below the stairs Christmas party at Buckingham Palace.

Capitalist 'Santa Claus'

Chrysler Corporation announced December 21 a Christmas bonus of \$45 to \$90 to each of its 41,316 wage workers. However, it was explained, this would be in place of paid vacations next year.

What They Fought For

Disclosing the increasing difficulty veterans are having finding jobs, the latest Commerce Department's "Survey of Current Business" states: "Despite the fact that peak separations had not occurred and that many veterans already released were not seeking work, difficulties in reabsorption (placing in civilian jobs) had begun to emerge during September and October."

Wants Only the 'Best'

Press dispatches last week reported that Dictator Chiang Kai-shek has requested Allied approval for keeping some "high-grade" Japanese troops in China to help "maintain order."

"Danger" Of Equality

"It is obvious that a world state based on the complete equality of man would be controlled by the nations of largest population. In such a state, our country would have less than half the influence of either India or China. We would have less influence than Russia." (Col. Charles Lindbergh, calling for a world organization dominated by the Western Powers.)

Next Stage In The GM Strike

By The Editors

The top officers of the CIO auto union are following out to the bitter end their strike "strategy" of "isolating" GM and "playing ball" with Ford, the "independent" of the auto industry. This "strategy" has proven itself over and over again to be unrealistic, out of line with the facts, dangerous to the strike. It has already resulted in one backward step after another on the part of the union. It has already weakened labor's national fight for a decent wage standard. It has already put strong weapons into the hands of the labor-hating industrialists.

But the bewildered top auto union officials have stubbornly continued on their original course. They permit themselves to get sucked deeper and deeper into the dangerous waters, in the vain hope that they can thus out-manuever the General Motors Corporation, and through Ford, break the "log-jam" on wages.

But with every further step of this screwball "strategy," the UAW leaders further disorient the GM strike, demoralize the workers and endanger the very foundations of this crucial labor struggle. That is why it is proper that all of us take special time out right now to analyze what has been going on and to take the necessary steps to retrieve this situation, and plant labor's feet on the right road, the road that can and will lead to victory.

How "Strategy" Has Worked Out

Thomas, Reuther and the other UAW leaders worked out a strike "strategy" which stated in effect that GM, Ford and Chrysler are competitors, that the union would close down GM but permit its "rivals" to keep working. Then, by special concessions to Ford, who for some unknown reason was presumed to be an "independent," the union would succeed in winning wage increases from him and thus set a "pattern" for the industry. This represents in a nutshell the Thomas-Reuther master-plan in the present fight.

Has it worked out in practice? To ask the question

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