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September 29, 1955

TO ALL DISTRICTS

Dear Comrades:

Subject: Emmett Louis Till Lynching

The freeing of the murderers of 14 year old Emmett Louis Till in a so-called Mississippi "trial", and the marked increase of anti-Negro terror in the Deep South as well as in other parts of the country during the past months must become the immediate concern of the entire membership of the Communist Party: every district, every club, every member. The Emmett Till murder highlights the ends to which the Dixiecrats will go to defeat the growing desegregation and right to vote movement in the South. Popular indignation is widespread. Negro organizations, Negro leaders and the Negro press have sounded the alarm. If this important struggle is to be won, however, the Communist Party, and the American Left, in the first place, must be fully mobilized.

Notwithstanding important work already being done by the Party and the Left around the Emmett Till case, the de-segregation, and right to vote movement, we must frankly state that the initiative of the Party on these vital struggles is far from satisfactory. Thus far, insufficient leadership, consciousness, planning, follow through, and check-up are being displayed on the part of Party and Left leadership at all levels. If victory is to be achieved in this crucial fight, these weaknesses must be speedily overcome.

We submit below a number of proposals and suggestions for consideration and action by the Party:

1--Fundamental issues of great importance to the American labor movement, the Negro people, the fight for democracy and peace are involved in this fight. No attempt will be made here to examine these issues. Such an examination is being made in a basic statement of the National Committee on the Till lynching. This statement will be issued this week, and is one that should be given thorough consideration by the Party Leadership and membership in every District. The National Committee Statement, in addition to being published in the Press, is being reproduced in leaflet form. These leaflets may be secured from the National Office at a cost of $_____ per thousand. We urge the widest possible distribution of the leaflets, and that all

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Districts order as quickly as possible.

2--Develop the Movement to Force the Eisenhower Administration to Intervene: This requires hundreds of thousands of postcards, telegrams, letters, petititions and resolutions to the President and Attorney General Brownell from individuals and organizations. This means trade union bodies in the first place at all levels, labor leaders, and rank and file members; it means, likewise, involving, at all levels, church and religious institutions, the major Jewish organizations, Democratic Party organizations; the youth movement; cultural groups; as well as the major organizations of the Negro people. In addition, full support should be given to delegations now being organized to visit Washington. Many leading Negro people and their organizations are working on such delegations. In addition to this, the Party and the Left should stimulate in every way possible the organization of such delegations. Particularly is this desirable from nearby points in the East.

An important aspect of this movement is to petition City Councils in all parts of the country to urge Brownell to act. There is no doubt whatever but that many City Councils will act if the necessary efforts are made, and if the broadest possible approach is developed. Likewise, the movement to force action from the Department of Justice will grow still further, if leading personalities in Negro life, from the labor movement, etc., were to purchase newspaper space in the metropolitan and Negro press to address open letters to the Attorney General and the President. In addition hundreds and thousands of memorial meetings are required. Already, Chicago, Cleveland, Harlem, Baltimore, and Detroit have witnessed large protest rallies involving tens of thousands. But these meetings must be seen as only the beginning. They must spread, until all major cities are included, as well as smaller towns and communities throughout the country. Likewise, organizations of all kinds should take up the Till murder in one or another manner--a small memorial meeting; a brief discussion on an action program, or a resolution, etc.

3--Project this struggle into the center of the preparation for the convening of Congress in January and of the 1956 elections, as well as for a special session of Congress: Among other things this requires a movement to challenge the right of Eastland to sit in the next session of Congress, as well as

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the Congressmen from Mississippi. They are in Congress illegally and should be ousted. The Eisenhower Administration must be forced to yield to the demands of the Negro people for a special session of Congress to pass anti-lynch and other civil rights legislation without delay. To win this demand the Democratic Party high command, still silent, must be compelled by the Labor and Negro people's movement to speak out in support of the demand of the Negro people for a special session of Congress. In this connection special emphasis should be given to the Kenning's Committee hearings on Civil Rights. Also it is necessary to insist upon the intervention of the Judiciary Committees of both the House and the Senate.

4--We are informed also that the newspaper Freedom is publishing a pamphlet on the Till murder and related issues, and that it will be off the press in a few weeks. Undoubtedly, this will be a pamphlet deserving of the support of those forces most concerned with this question.

5--Develop still further the militant initiative of the Party and the Left: While fighting for the broadest possible unity of the Negro people and their allies in respect to this issue, we must avoid the error of construing this to mean tagging along after the reformist leadership in the labor and Negro movement. We must find the way, in the broadest and most flexible manner to advance the Party analysis of these events, showing at all times the need for a greater focus on Brownell, and a more rounded program of demands. The huge protest rallies thus far, while marking a high point in the unity and militancy of the Negro people, reflect at the same time certain important weaknesses in regards to the program of demands being advanced, and in regard to the all-important matter of demanding immediate action from the Department of Justice. A central responsibility of the Party and the Left is to work with this movement to overcome these negative factors.

The Party and the Left at the same time must speak out independently, finding the most suitable forms for independent actions. One of those forms would be to give full support to weekend Worker mobilizations that are being organized in a number of cities, where the fight for Worker circulation is tied up with house-to-house or street corner canvassing of telegrams, etc. on the Till murder. Another form is through the organization of mass meetings of a Left or advanced character. There are a number of leading Negro and white progressive leaders who are no doubt available to participate

in such meetings. In addition the Party and Left forces must intensify many times the publication and distribution of material on the Till murder and related issues. There are some Districts where practically no material has been issued. In still others the few leaflets issued have been confined primarily to the Negro communities.

We urge all District Boards and other leading Party Committees and Commissions to examine fully the work of the District thus far in respect to the struggles around the Till murder, with the aim of overcoming whatever errors exist, and hammering out a full District program of action for the period ahead.

Please be sure to send us copies of whatever material you issue in this matter.

Comradely yours,

NATIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE

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