

Ask Governor's Aid

B'ham Civic Groups Score Terror Reign

(Special to The Courier)

BIRMINGHAM, Ala.—Rivalled in ruthlessness only by the infamous Spanish Inquisition of the Dark Ages, Birmingham's persistent campaign of terror and intimidation against Negroes by local "peace" officers saw three major developments last week-end:

1. An enraged Negro citizenry dispatched a scorching petition to Alabama's Gov. James E. Folsom, the State's Attorney General and Birmingham's civic officials.
2. City Commissioner Eugene Connor responded to the petition, backed by sixty-six Negro organizations, with the overworked and weak-kneed alibi of calling it "Communist line stuff."
3. The Negro Citizens Defense Committee is contemplating plans to file suits or take other drastic measures to stop the relentless reign of police terrorizing which has claimed eight lives within seventy days.

The strongly worded petition from the Citizens Committee was sent to the State and city officials following a series of shocking "legal" slayings. This was climaxed with a raid on a Negro girl scout camp and the intimidation of two of its white leaders by a gang of hooded men.

PROTECTION ASKED

The petition contained an urgent plea for protection against the relentless and malicious hate-spreading operations of the Ku Klux Klan, and a coroner's inquest into the slaying of eight Negroes who died from guns of officers of the law within the past two months.

Approximately one hundred names were signed to the petition which is endorsed by sixty-six Negro civic, business, professional and welfare organizations.

CONNOR'S "ALIBI"

Claiming that the petition followed "the Communist line, exactly, all the way through," Commissioner Connor said that he did not intend to reply to the plea.

Judge Emmett Perry, however, who was also sent a petition, promised to investigate the charges.

Another noncommittal recipient of the petition, Sheriff Holt McDowell declared:

"I have no reply to make."

The only complaint involving county officers, according to Sheriff McDowell, was about the shooting of an armed man who attempted to escape after killing a deputy.

TO PROBE CAMP RAID

Sheriff McDowell promised to make a thorough investigation of the raid on Camp Pauline Bray Fletcher by the hooded gang. He said that his office intended to "do everything within our power to gather evidence and put it before the grand jury." He added, however, that no clues had been found at the camp.

CITIZENS MAY SUE

Meanwhile an unconfirmed report hinted that a citizens group was considering procedure to file a suit in connection with the killing of the Rev. C. L. Butler, 53, a retired miner of Edgewater, by police bullets.

A friend of the slain minister, Granville Allen, who tried to investigate his death, was allegedly threatened and left for a Northern city. Even lodge meetings of Negroes in Edgewater have reportedly been broken up by police.

The militant Citizens Defense Committee, however, is not discouraged, but seems to be all the more determined to push its fight for the termination of police intimidation and aggression against the Negro citizens of Birmingham who pay taxes for protection and justice from its peace officers, rather than abuses.

—END JIM CROW IN ARMED FORCES—