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MIMS, FLORIDA

It may be that the background of the lush, natural beauty of blue lakes and sky, of orange trees so studded with golden fruit as almost to obliterate the green foliage and of "Millionaires' Row" in Winter Park makes the bombed home here of Harry T. Moore more incongruous and shocking than the destruction I witnessed during the war in Europe and Asia. For here is the shambles of the modest dwelling place of a man, now dead, and his wife, now lying critically wounded in nearby Sanford, because he had dared to speak out and work for enforcement of the law.

Today I turned over to the F. B. I. the names of three persons who allegedly have recently advocated mob action against Mr. Moore. They are not the only ones who have voiced resentment against him. Repeatedly since August, 1949, he had written to Gov. Fuller E. Warren urging him to assign trustworthy persons from the Governor's office instead of Sheriff Willis McCall of Lake County to transport Samuel Shepherd and Walter Irvin from the state prison at Raiford to Tavares, Lake County county seat, for a hearing on a motion for a change of venue in the new trial which had been ordered by the U. S. Supreme Court.

The entire world knows what happened because of Gov. Warren's refusal to act as was requested by Mr. Moore. Samuel Shepherd is dead and Walter Irvin recovering from three bullet wounds inflicted by McCall on a backroad near Eustis. McCall, backed by J. J. Elliott, Gov. Warren's personal representative, asserts that he fired in "self-defense," although neither man denies that the two prisoners were handcuffed together at the time of the shooting.

Following the 1944 decision of the U.S. Supreme Court against the barring of qualified Negro voters from so-called "white Democratic primaries," the number of registered Negro voters in Florida, as in other Southern states, has measurably increased. Today it is estimated to number close to one hundred thousand voters in Florida--a bloc large enough to hold the balance of power in local and state elections. Many Floridians have taken this development in stride as a desirable step forward towards ending the evil of disfranchisement. But there are some who resent this or any other manifestation of Negro progress. Much of the growth of Negro participation in Florida political affairs is properly attributed to the patient work of Harry Moore.

It was for these and other activities that Harry Moore lies dead today. It is impossible to describe adequately the effect of the tragic

blast of either nitroglycerine or TNT. Explosives experts are convinced that dynamite could not have done such destruction. They are also convinced that the crime was painstakingly planned, timed for the only period of the year when the entire family would be gathered together. Mr. Moore traveled constantly for the NAACP. Mrs. Moore is a teacher in a rural school near Palm Beach. Both she and Mr. Moore were denied renewal of their contracts as teachers in Brevard County because of hostility of the school officials to Mr. Moore's participation in a legal campaign against educational inequalities inflicted on Negroes. One of the Moore daughters is a secretary in the Department of Labor in Washington and the other is a secretary in the public school system of Ocala. The bombers waited until the entire family gathered to spend Christmas--birthday of the Prince of Peace--together. So shattered is the modest cottage that<sup>no</sup> one knows why one of the Moore daughters and Mr. Moore's 71-year-old mother, who slept in an adjoining room, were not also killed. It is obvious that the criminals intended to wipe out the entire family.

Gov. Fuller Warren, irritated by criticisms of the failure of the State of Florida to act against bombings here and in Miami, has issued daily blasts at this commentator as "a disturber of the peaceful relations between the races." How peaceful those relations have been are best mirrored in a front-page story in the December 29 issue of the Miami Herald. Here is a part of the background of terrorism which preceded the assassination of Harry Moore. Last March 31 Melvin Womack, an orange grove worker, was taken from his home in Oakland by four white men late at night. The following morning he was found beaten and shot to death. No arrests have yet been made.

Last February 6 Luther Coleman, Negro janitor at the Winter Garden elementary school, was beaten unmercifully by several white men in the heart of downtown Winter Garden. No arrests of his assailants have yet been made.

In November, 1950 Jimmie Woodards, in his late teens, was shot by white men five times but miraculously recovered.

During Easter of 1950 William Vincent, 50-year-old Negro, was abducted by three white men, beaten unmercifully and later found with a fractured skull. All of these crimes occurred in Orange County. In September, 1951 an 11-year-old colored girl was brutally raped by three white men at Bunnell, Fla. The attackers have not yet been brought to trial.

These are samples of the unpunished crimes against Negroes in Florida now highlighted by the assassination of Harry Moore and by the spreading of mob violence against Jews, Catholics and others.

To Florida's credit are the vigor and courage of most of its newspapers, especially in the metropolitan areas, in exposing the breakdown of law and order. Many citizens of the state, Negro and white, are shocked and aroused. Hotel men, proprietors of tourist resorts and Chambers of Commerce are awakening to the fact that millions of dollars may be lost by the unsavory developments here. Already an alarming number of cancellations of reservations for the winter tourist season have been reported. It is possible that this combination of moral indignation and economic interest may result in action. If the energy and determination of the F. B. I. can be approximated by Florida law enforcement officials, there is hope that Harry Moore's tragic and violent death may diminish if not put an end to the violence which has become an epidemic here.

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