

Toward Freedom

IT IS ironical, indeed, that the most undemocratic and "Un-American" Congressman from the least democratic state in the union, Mississippi, should now have the effrontery to inject himself into the councilmanic campaign of a genuine fighter-for-democracy, Ben Davis, in probably the most democratic great city of our nation.

But this is part of the meaning of the subpoenas issued by the Rankin-dominated new "Dies Committee" for Councilman Ben Davis and other Communist leaders to testify in Washington today. One of the foremost and immediate purposes of their witch-hunt is to smear Ben Davis on the phony "separate Negro state" issue, which his political opponents are trying to play up as a means of preventing his reelection—and thereby any Negro representation in the New York City Council.

John Rankin, whose trick parliamentary move succeeded in reviving the "Dies Committee" on the first day of Congress, has reasons we can well understand for trying to defeat Councilman Benjamin Davis.

Rankin was elected in 1940 by 7,079 votes—representing just 3 percent of the people of Mississippi. Practically all of these were votes by white Mississippians, because the



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feudalistic rulers for whom Rankin speaks continue to disfranchise Negroes and most all of the poor whites. This is how a misrepresentative of his type is able to remain in Congress year after year—indeed, since 1921.

Davis was elected by the votes of some 43,000 citizens of Manhattan. Over half of these votes were cast by progressive white citizens, who recognized in Ben Davis a staunch fighter for the rights of all people. It was a free election, in which all citizens were allowed to vote, and which was conducted by the most democratic election system yet devised—proportional representation.

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JOHAN RANKIN personifies the most vicious anti-democratic forces in American political life. He slanders Jews and Negroes and foreign-born citizens; hates and does all he can to weaken organized labor; seeks to exploit our veterans; and throws all of his parliamentary skill and arrogance into the struggle to block measures designed to broaden the freedom and enhance the economic security of the masses of people.

Ben Davis personifies the essence of American democracy. Although a member of an oppressed minority, he serves with distinc-

Mississippi's Rankin Enters Harlem Politics

tion on the legislative body of the greatest city in our nation. In his official capacity he struggles not only to relieve the special problems of his own people, but equally as hard to combat the persecution of foreign-born citizens and Jews, and also to have our local, state and national government use its power to broaden democracy and security for all Americans.

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IT IS our opinion, however, that Rankin and his "Gestapo" associates on the Un-American Committee of the House of Representatives will get slapped in the face for their smear attempt.

They will find that Ben Davis and the other Communist leaders they have subpoenaed are able, courageous and thoroughly informed spokesmen for the people — more than a match for such petty politicians as emerge from the rotten-boroughs of Mississippi. They will also find that the politically mature voters of Harlem cannot be stampeded by the once effective but now outmoded Hitlerian device of red-baiting.

Yes, we can well understand why Rankin and his ilk are trying to enter and confuse the Harlem Councilmanic campaign. But we have full confidence that this time they will meet their masters.