

THE GRAVEST MISTAKE

The News is in accord with the enlightened sentiment of the nation in its belief that the administration of justice should be left with the Courts of the land. This means that we abhor and condemn the practice of lynching and with equal emphasis do we condemn the obstruction of the Court's administration by outside agitators, even though they may use legal methods of obstruction.

The lynching of the colored man in Salisbury last Friday night was the direct result of outside interference with the legal machinery of the First Judicial Circuit of Maryland. We will go further and say that the cold-blooded murder of Dan Elliott was, in our opinion, the direct outgrowth of Communistic propaganda that has been spread in this section of the State since Orphan Jones confessed to having slain an entire Worcester county family. If the report in Sunday's Baltimore Sun is correct a spokesman of a Communistic group was in Salisbury just a couple of nights before the Elliott murder and addressed a gathering of Negroes. This spokesman, of course, told his audience how down-trodden and oppressed they are and urged that they rebel against the white man's dominance.

Whether this be true or not, it is safe to say that had Orphan Jones been speedily tried after the commission of the crime for which he stands indicted, there would have been no lynching in Salisbury nor mob violence on the Shore.

To see that Justice was done the Court appointed one of the Shore's outstanding attorneys to defend this man who was unable to employ counsel. This attorney, F. Leonard Wailes, would have exerted his talents in the man's defense and if by any chance he was innocent would have cleared him. But for the sake of publicity, Bernard Ades, representing a Communistic order, injected himself into the case. While the Negro was confined in the Baltimore jail a judge of the Baltimore Supreme Bench granted Ades permission to interview the prisoner and it was then that the trouble started.

Mr. Wailes rightly refused to be associated with Ades in the trial and the patience of the populace of the Eastern Shore was severely strained. Nearly two months had passed since a man, his wife and two daughters had been massacred, and yet the alleged assailant was resting securely in the Baltimore jail.

Since this murder an attempted criminal assault upon a white woman had taken place in Kent county and in that case also Mr. Ades proffered his services. This was too much for the people of the Shore. For generations we have been able to handle our criminal affairs and the Courts have maintained the respect of the citizens. The people here have been generally peaceful, quiet and law-abiding and secure in their feeling that justice always would prevail. This feeling of security has been to a large extent lost since the sofar successful efforts to thwart justice in the Jones case.

There is little wonder then the Wicomico citizens failed to control themselves last Friday night and took the law into their own hands. By so doing they stated in emphatic terms that they were tired of outside interference and would put up with it no longer. The victim of their wrath was a poor misguided Negro who had been incited to murder by a professional agitator. As we see it, the gravest mistake made by the infuriated citizens was in allowing the Communistic agitator to escape unscathed. The poor Negro would undoubtedly have been convicted for his crime and paid the penalty, but the Courts are powerless to punish those who waved the red flag and incited the murder.

As we said in the beginning, we condemn the practice of lynching, but as much as we deplore mob violence, we believe that good will come of Friday night's occurrence. There is no ill feeling between the white and colored races in this section and the better element of the latter race are unanimous in their opinion that this series of crimes recently committed on the Shore must be stamped out if race trouble is to be avoided.