

Eisenhower to Address NAACP Freedom Meet

NEW YORK — What will President Eisenhower say in his first formal address to a predominantly Negro audience since his inauguration a year ago?

This question came to the minds of Negroes in all walks of life and all parts of the country as the NAACP announced from its New York headquarters that the President will make a "short talk" to a conference of the organization's leaders in Washington on March 10.

The conference, previously billed as the formal kick-off of the "Free by '63" campaign initiated at the St. Louis convention last June, will bring together local, state and regional heads of the civil rights organization.

Will Eisenhower confine himself to a mild and generalized disapproval of segregation as he has done in the past? Will he omit specific reference to civil rights bills (FEPC, anti-lynching, anti-poll tax) as he did in his State of the Union message? Or will he make specific commitments as to what his administration will do to achieve the NAACP's goal — full equality for Negroes by the 100th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1963?

These questions take on special importance in an election year when Negro voters will be seeking to extend their political gains in face of the resistance of the big business Republican-feudal Dixiecrat coalition which was so largely responsible for Eisenhower's election.

Freedom

"Where one is enslaved, all are in chains!"

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10c

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Louisiana Sugar Cane Workers Brave Terror to Build Their Union

Special Correspondence

BATON ROUGE, La.—The month-long strike (Oct.-Nov.) of sugar plantation workers in Louisiana turned the eyes of the nation on the plight of agricultural workers in the South. Not since the days of the Knights of Labor, with its militant union-organizing drives during the 1880's, have the plantation field hands fought the sugar barons on such a scale. (During those struggles in the last century strike leaders were arrested, but they were defended before the Louisiana Supreme Court by a Negro state senator, Henry Demas.)

The plantation landlords were caught by surprise. For several weeks before harvesting began, leaders of Local 312, National Agricultural Workers Union (AFL), which had been quietly organizing the sugar field workers

for almost a year, asked for a meeting to negotiate a contract with the plants represented by the American Sugar Cane League.

The planters laughed. They boasted that their "boys" were not interested in any union. Believing their own line that the union was a "myth" and "rumor" they flatly refused to meet with Local 312 representatives.

2,000 Laborers Involved

The union demands were modest: 75c an hour for unskilled workers; \$1 an hour for

the skilled—tractor drivers, harvester machine operators. The present scale is \$4.05 and \$3.40 per nine-hour day for skilled and unskilled workers. This means \$20.40 to \$24.30 for 54 hours of back-breaking toil.

The planters' official response to the demand for negotiations appeared in the New Orleans Times-Picayune (10/16/53). G. J. Durbin, president of the American Sugar Cane League, declared: "It is my firm conviction that no sugar grower will deal with the union under any circumstances."

On Monday, October 12, Negro and white farm laborers, 1,200 strong, walked out of the cane fields. The strike continued to grow and spread. One week later the strike involved 2,000 farm laborers on 75 plantations.

The landlords screamed "communism"—and officially called upon U.S. Attorney General Brownell to "investigate" the strike for "subversive" activities. The big planters knew they had a friend in the Eisenhower administration and Brownell, who

only a few months earlier had indicted several leaders of the union on frame-up charges of "conspiring to raise prices of farm products!"

Evictions, Injunctions, Terror

The plants quickly set their sights on crushing the union, spreading terror among the farm laborers and their families, and breaking the back of the strike. One of the biggest sugar barons, old man Godchaux himself, was up at 5 a.m. on several days, personally

(Continued on Page 3)

A '54 Resolution: Get Jim Crow Off the Rails!

By LOUIS BURNHAM

MOST Americans know, and accept as "normal," the fact that railroad-ing is a jimcrow industry. Negroes may carry bags, wash cars, serve food and make beds; but when it comes to driving trains, switching engines, collecting money or preparing menus—whites only need apply.

Negroes themselves, however, have never accepted these facts as final. The record shows that for more than half a century they have fought against overwhelming odds to maintain and extend their once-substantial foothold in the operating crafts of the industry. The NAACP, church organizations, groups of Negro railroad workers, the Urban League—all have waged the battle in the courts, before government committees and at the bar of public opinion.

Thus, when the Natl. Negro Labor Council resolved at its third annual convention (Chicago, Dec. 4-6 to make the fight against discrimination in railroad employment its major campaign in '54, a new impetus was added to an old crusade.

ARTERIES AND VEINS: Railroad talk dominated the convention, beginning with the declaration in the keynote speech of exec. secy. Coleman Young, former Wayne County (Detroit) CIO organizational director, that:

"... the treatment of Negro railroad workers is so cruel that John Henry has turned over in his grave and is walking around at night with his hammer in his hand."

First came a description of the giant carriers employing 1,200,000 workers. In 1952 they netted \$820 million profits after taxes. As one delegate put it, the railroads are not only the backbone

of industry, but the arteries and veins. Despite increasing competition from air and truck transportation, 75% of all raw materials and 92% of all finished products go by rail.

Grants of public land and money, contracts to carry troops, freight and mail, have made the carriers fat. They are the first to point to their public responsibility and importance to the national security when railroad workers threaten to strike. But none of the federal laws and agencies which regulate the conduct of the companies (RR Labor Act, Natl. Mediation Board, RR Adjustment Board, President's Committee on Contract Compliance) has ever intervened to change their long-standing jimcrow hiring policies.

WAGES, BLACK AND WHITE: Between 1910 and 1940 more than 6,000 Negro firemen were forced off Southern trains where they once were in the majority. Negro hostlers and round-house workers are being reduced to an insignificant number. Railroad apprenticeship training is sponsored by the U.S. Dept. of Labor, but Negro youth are systematically excluded from courses.

Porters and dining car waiters must work 240 hours a month before time-and-a-half begins. And where, as occasionally happens, they perform brakemen's or stewards' jobs, they are paid slightly more than ordinary porters and waiters, but much less than brakemen and stewards. As one company spokesman put it to a delegation representing Negro railroad associations:

"If we have to pay white men's wages, we might as well hire whites."

A YEAR OR TEN: To combat this situation the Council adopted a many-sided program designed to:



FROM DETROIT'S AUTO PLANTS CAME THE BIG DELEGATIONS

4th from left, front row, is Layman Walker, Briggs Local 742, (UAW) new NNLC president

(1) Open every job category in the railroad industry to Negroes "if it takes a year or ten years."

(2) Provide equal training opportunities for Negro youth in all apprenticeship programs conducted by the roads (sole qualifications are: 20-35 years of age and high school diploma).

(3) Secure upgrading opportunities for all Negroes now employed on the roads.

(4) Influence the President's Committee on Contract Compliance to conduct an investigation and hold

public hearings on RR jimcrow.

(5) Withdraw all federal subsidies from the carriers until a democratic hiring policy prevails.

(6) Convince the lily-white RR Brotherhoods to drop their jimcrow practices "as a means of enhancing their bargaining power."

(7) End all segregation in seating, eating, sleeping and other facilities, especially in the South.

The convention authorized establishment of a national committee to coordinate the campaign and launch an Equality in Railroad Fund Drive.

A RECENT VISITOR REPORTS ON:

Children and Education in New China

By LOUIS WHEATON

Since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949 the children of this vast country have been living in a paradise compared to their lot under Chiang Kai-shek and under Japanese occupation. The care and concern for children that I saw the ten months I was in China shows that the New China is indeed a government of, by, and for its people, despite all the propaganda turned out by official U.S. press agents in Washington.

Before liberation there were no health facilities or organizations in the countryside. The infant mortality rate was extremely high. Since liberation there have been set up 32,400 maternity stations and 3,300 health institutions for women and children in the countryside. In 1952, 148,000 temporary nurseries were set up in the villages throughout China. This is 10.5 times the number that existed in 1951. More than 2,700 creches have been set up—22 times the number that existed in 1949.

Young Pioneers

Primary schools are constantly increasing. In 1952 there were 50,000,000 pupils in primary schools, an increase of 110 per cent over the highest figure before liberation of New China in 1949. Today, there are 9,100 primary schools for national minorities with an enrollment of over 94,300 pupils. Before liberation these minorities had no schools.

The children of New China have set up their own organization called the Chinese Young Pioneers. The membership is estimated at 7,200,000 in the past three years. In Peking, Tsingtao, Canton, Port Arthur, Dairen and other cities there are youth cultural palaces, playgrounds, parks, and reading rooms especially for children and youth. In the summer the young people are in camps on the coast and at the lakes of the beautiful countryside. The government guarantees that the orphans and homeless children enjoy all of these things and that they get the best care and protection.

Education Free for ALL

Here I must mention the educational reform in New China. The new government of China has systematically carried out such reforms in all aspects of the old educational system according to plan. First, there was a general reform of the educational system. The key to the new system is the



WAVING BANNERS AND SHOUTING SLOGANS for peace and independence, these Chinese students have found new dignity and new opportunity in New China.

important place given the education of working people and the peasants of New China. Whoever is willing to exert himself will have the opportunity for a college education.

Secondly, all educational facilities are placed at the disposal of the workers and peasants. In 1952 over 80 per cent of primary students, 60 per cent of the secondary students and 20 per cent of the college students came from the workers and peasants of China. This was unheard of before in all of China's history.

Thirdly, there was the ideological remodeling of teachers. This meant studying the new theories, examination of the new method and viewpoint of education and criticism of their old method of work and viewpoint.

Engineers Lead the Way

Fourthly, there is seen everywhere the reorganization of the higher education to meet the needs of the Chinese people. For example, the number of higher technical schools was increased from 31 to 47, agricultural and forestry colleges from 18 to 33, medical colleges

from 29 to 32 in 1952. In 1946 under Chiang Kai-shek the number of engineering students was 18.9 per cent of those in higher schools; in 1952 the number increased to 34.5 per cent, coming first among the various professions.

Fifthly, the reform brought about the raising of the political status of students and teachers and the improvement of their living standards. Both teachers and students are respected and loved by the people. Teachers and students are organized in mass organizations; for example, the teacher's union and the students' union—whose representatives take part in the peoples government on all levels. Compared with 1951 the salaries of teachers in institutions of higher learning increased 18.6 per cent in 1952; secondary school teachers 25.5 per cent; primary school teachers 37.4 per cent.

All students in technical secondary schools, normal schools and institutions of higher learning receive annually a people's subsidy from the government, while students among

the industrial and agricultural government workers' ranks as well as worker-students from their benches receive even higher allowances. Thus, not only are boarding expenses defrayed by the state for all students but they receive also pocket money for miscellaneous expenses.

'Backward' No More

Therefore it becomes clear that in New China education is designed to create a beautiful life in independence, peace, democracy and freedom by means of one's own work. This is the feeling of the masses of the Chinese people. What has been achieved through the peaceful, constructive and creative work of the Chinese people in the past four years is nothing less than astonishing. China today, in her work for the construction of her country, for peace and friendship for the people of the world can never again be referred to as a "culturally backward" people. They are a growing, enlightened people who have advanced from a so-called "backward people" to a new power among nations of the world. These

New York A.S.P. Sponsors Negro History Programs

NEW YORK—A concert featuring the works of twentieth century Negro composers will climax a series of events sponsored by the New York Council of the Arts, Sciences, and Professions for Negro History Week, according to an announcement by Mrs. Marvel Cooke, director. The concert, planned by the ASP Music Division, will be given at the Pythian, 135 West 70 Street, Friday evening, February 26. Tickets and information about the program are available at ASP headquarters, 35 West 64 Street, SU 7-4677.

Among the other events, earlier in the month, is the presentation of awards for the winning posters in the art competition sponsored by the ASP Art Division. This will take place at ASP, Friday, February 12, 8:30 P.M. Posters with Negro life and history as their theme, have come from all sections of the United States and will be on display at ASP starting February 8.

A recently discovered portrait of Frederick Douglass as a young man, the work of an unknown artist of Douglass' time, will be unveiled at a reception at ASP on February 14, from 3 to 6 P.M. The program will include readings from Douglass' works and a talk by Richard Moore, lecturer and specialist on the life and times of Frederick Douglass.

On February 21, at 8:30 P.M. at the ASP, the Writing and Publishing Division will present readings of material written especially for Negro History Week at its evening of "Writing Out Loud."

Throughout February, a number of exhibits will be on display at ASP headquarters. In addition to the posters, there is a showing of the work of the late Romulo Lachatañe, a Negro photographer killed two years ago in an airplane crash in Puerto Rico. Most of the photographs were taken in Puerto Rico; others reflect life in New York's Harlem community. Also being set up is an exhibit depicting the contributions of Negro scientists and another of manuscripts, books, and photographs of Negro composers and musicians. The public is invited to see these exhibits at the ASP gallery, open daily from 2 P.M. to 8 P.M. and during the other events announced above.

In announcing these plans, Mrs. Cooke stressed the fact that the various divisions of ASP and its Equal Rights Committee see these events not only as testimonials to the work of Negro artists and scientists but also as a springboard for a year of continued effort to bring to life the theme of Negro History Week 1954: Negro History—A Foundation for Integration. One example of this, Mrs. Cooke pointed out, is the jobs campaign begun by the Health and Welfare Division. Its goal is to open up more jobs in doctors' and dentists' offices for Negro nurses, technicians, and assistants.

For further details about these projects, call at ASP, 35 West 64 Street, SU 7-4677.

FREEDOM FAMILY

Your Paper Needs Sustained Support—Will You Help?

You, who read these FREEDOM pages, are among the most loyal and cooperative supporters any good cause ever had. You've stuck with us through the lean days, sent your dollars in to help, and gotten others to join up in the FREEDOM family.

Right now you're probably wondering what's cooking in our office, so this little letter is aimed at bringing you up to date and dispelling any confusion which an irregular schedule of publications may have caused.

You now have in hand our November and December, 1953, issues, each consisting of four pages. Shortly you will receive another four-pager, the January FREEDOM. And soon after that, the February issue will arrive, again four pages.

This schedule will enable us to be current by the time March rolls around, and with

that issue we will return to the usual eight-page FREEDOM.

This plan depends, of course, on our ability to solve the financial crisis which is just as pressing as ever. We know that we can do it if we have, not only your continuing indulgence, but also your increasing help. We are preparing a letter to you. Here's a preview of what it says:

Will you become a FREEDOM sustainer? Will you be one of hundreds throughout the country who pledge and send \$1 a month to keep FREEDOM going and help it grow? Our biggest need at the moment is for a GUARANTEED MONTHLY INCOME over and above the substantial increase in readers projected for 1954.

At the moment your \$1 for annual sub does not quite cover the cost of getting

FREEDOM to you—printing, promotion, overhead, salaries. Some day it will—when our readership is about tripled. But meanwhile it's tough and we have to operate on the basis of a built-in monthly deficit.

That's why the sustainers are so vital. They'll keep us going and growing until we reach enough readers to hit that elusive "break-even" point. So won't you help, with \$1 a month for FREEDOM?

The letter you get will read something like the foregoing. And there'll be a self-addressed envelope and a pledge blank. You should receive it before the end of February. But if you're a FREEDOM sparkplug, why wait? Just send your buck today with a note that you want to be a sustainer, and we'll remind you each and every month.

Freedom

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Sugar Cane Workers Demand Better Wages

(Continued from page 1)

passing out eviction notices to the workers and their families on his plantation.

Two dozen strikers, on behalf of all, filed suit in the District Court against 15 planters to prevent further evictions. The union men and women formed a picket line around the entrance to the huge, monopoly-owned South-down Plantation in Houma; they appealed to the workers in the sugar mills, through leaflets, to support the field workers' strike.

The plants went to the courts and secured a permanent injunction against all picketing of "their property." In addition to evictions, injunctions and sheriff-terror—the stock-in-trade weapons of the plants—the strategy for defeating the strike rested upon two tactics:

1. Keep the sugar grinding mills in full operation, and,
2. Split the small farmers away from the farm laborers and their strike through propaganda to the effect that the strike was against all cane farmers, so big planters and small farmers "must stand together."

Small Farmers Crushed

The grinding mills are located on the big plantations. Many of these mills are already organized into the Packinghouse Workers Union, CIO. These workers have an iron-clad "no-strike" clause in their contract; and the Taft-Hartley law prohibits any "sympathy" strike or secondary boycott, as it is called. This was the planters' ace-in-the-hole.

The big operators appealed to the small cane farmers to bring in their crop to the grinding mill first, and then to help harvest the crop on the big plantations. The desperate position of the small farmers is seen in the fact that more than 20% of them in Louisiana have been wiped out of sugar competition in the past five years by growth of monopoly control in this highly-mechanized farm industry.

Louisiana is the largest sugar cane producer in the U.S. and sugar cane is one of the three largest farm products in this state. The state's senior senator, Allen J. Ellender, owns a big sugar plantation on Bayou La Fourche, and he is a top man on the U.S. Senate Agriculture Committee. State Senator Horace Wilkinson III, chairman of the Louisiana Senate Agricultural Committee, owns a big sugar plantation in West Baton Rouge Parish, where Negroes were prevented from voting in the 1952 gubernatorial elections. These "enlightened" leaders of the "free world" with their die-hard prejudices against labor and Negroes, are typical of the land-owning bigots with whom the union had to contend.

International Solidarity

About 80% of the farm workers in Louisiana cane fields are Negroes. Their wages and working conditions are directly affected by the sub-standard conditions imposed upon the workers in the sugar



THESE LATIN AMERICAN sugar workers have a common fight with the Louisiana strikers.

producing, colonial and dependent countries, such as Puerto Rico, the Philippines, Cuba and the West Indies, who are under the heels of the U.S. and British sugar monopolies.

So, every struggle against the sugar trusts is welcomed by the workers in other countries. The Louisiana strikers received fraternal greetings and expressions of solidarity from the Confederation of Sugar Workers of Cuba as well as the Cuban Federation of Labor. Only a few months earlier the Cuban sugar workers had called a strike on the plantations owned by the American Sugar Corp. in support of the Packinghouse Workers, CIO, on strike at that company's refinery in New Orleans!

And it is of great significance that the same week the strike started, the British were sending troops to "restore law and order" in its South American colony of British Guiana in face of a demand for union recognition of Guianese workers.

Churches Support Strikers

All sections of Negro life in Louisiana were keenly interested in the sugar workers' strike. The plants were able to get next to one Negro minister and convince him to try to start a back-to-work movement among the workers. The minister has a fairly good-sized church in New Orleans. The Sunday following his public statement against the strike less than a dozen people showed up for service. Later the same week some of the church members called a special meeting to "set the record straight" and protect the good name of the church. The real sentiment of the Negro ministry was reflected by the large number of pastors from churches in the "sugar belt" who supported the union strike as a just struggle.

Most significant feature of the Louisiana strike was the way it expressed the militant moods for struggle among the land-poor rural population in

the South. There are more than a million unorganized wage laborers working in the cotton, cane, tobacco fields and fruit orchards of the South today. They are a powerful reserve of strength for the trade union movement in the U.S., in the fight against the Taft-Hartley-McCarthyite attacks on labor, in the battle for peaceful trade with all countries to relieve some of the unemployment in the cities and improve the market for farm products. These farm laborers are also a link with millions more rural people, the sharecroppers and tenants now facing worsened conditions as a result of the agricultural crisis developing all over the country.

Is there any wonder then that the plantation landlords and sugar brokers are so frightened by the presence of union organization among farm laborers?

Labor's Responsibility

AFL President George Meany called for all AFL affiliates to support the Louisiana sugar workers strike. Likewise the Railroad Brotherhoods showed some interest in the strike, carrying reports in their official journal, *Labor*. There is a growing understanding among the rank and file of labor that in order to make any basic progress or successfully defend its interests in the face of increased attacks, the labor movement must extend the base of union organization in the South.

The million-and-a-half Negro workers in AFL, CIO, RR Brotherhoods and independent unions have a special responsibility to help the whole labor movement see its vital tasks in relation to the South, the heartland of Negro oppression. The abandonment by the Eisenhower administration of even lip-service support to specific "civil rights" legislation (characteristic of the Truman administration), is an index of the new positions of influence and authority in national af-

BOOKS

REPORT ON SOUTHERN AFRICA, by Basil Davidson. Published by Jonathan Cape, London. 285 pages, references, index, map. Liberty Book Club selection.

Africa is being re-discovered today. There were the earlier discoveries of the slave traders and missionaries, of the Livingstons and Stanleys, of the charter companies, colonisers, and mining syndicates, and of the anthropologists, archeologists, and modernist painters. The current re-discovery had its beginnings in the 'thirties (should Mussolini and Hitler be appeased with a slice of Africa?); it gathered momentum, particularly in the United States, during World War II; and it has become accelerated in the ensuing Cold War years.

Says C. S. Sulzberger of the N.Y. Times, February 8, 1953: "Without Africa the Western world could not hold out indefinitely in a 'cold war,' and might lose a 'hot' one." Americans are hearing more and more of this sort of thing, more and more about the wealth of Africa's resources such as uranium, manganese, and bauxite, about Africa's key role in global military strategy, and about the "danger of Communism" in Africa.

Basil Davidson's book, *Report on Southern Africa*, is a much-needed and effective antidote to this distorted and dangerous "cold war" view of Africa.

Main Danger: White Supremacy

Concentrating on the Union of South Africa and adjacent areas of British Africa, the author exposes the real danger in Africa, not Communism but "white supremacy" ideology and practice. In a very readable style reminiscent of another able British writer on Africa, Leonard Barnes, Basil Davidson tells us what he per-

sonally saw in South Africa and quotes his conversations with all sorts of people there, white and black. From Government reports and other historical sources he draws a wealth of factual material showing the rights and purposes of the racist oppression which he describes in intimate and full detail.

Davidson gives us, too, another part of the South African picture too often omitted, even in such a book as E. S. Sachs' *The Choice before South Africa*: the role and record of organized African resistance to Smuts' white "trusteeship" and Malan's more openly fascist "apartheid."

The Union of South Africa and Rhodesia, along with Liberia, represent the areas of the continent in which the heaviest private and governmental investments of United States capital have been and are being made. Davidson points out that instead of contributing to the "enlightened development of Africa" this "tide of new capital" is flowing into the same old Jim Crow system and is dependent, as much as ever, "on supplies of cheap African labor."

The Road Ahead

"The choice for the whites," says Basil Davidson, and that means not only the resident white settlers but the absentee British and American investors as well, "is no longer simply one of choosing between the two roads which lead to freedom or to bondage for the Africans. . . . It becomes one of waging bitter and perhaps bloody struggles as the Africans step by step assert their rights—or of conforming intelligently to the needs of those social and economic forces which white civilization has itself forced into motion."

That is precisely why Americans, increasingly beset on all sides with "cold war" propaganda about Africa, need a clear-sighted and honest book like *Report on Southern Africa*.

ALPHAUS HUNTON

fairs today enjoyed by the Dixiecrats.

Labor's worse enemies have traditionally held sway in the South, on the backs of the white workers, the land-poor farmers and the doubly oppressed Negro people. Labor's most effective answer is to build union organization among all toiling sections of the Southern population.

Support Called For

The strike among sugar plantation workers in Louisiana can be the beginning of an important chapter in the life of the labor and Negro people's movements. The Agricultural Workers Union has postponed continuing the strike while it takes the injunction cases to the U.S. Supreme Court. Nevertheless, the farm laborers are determined to win "union recognition" and a better standard of living. The labor movement throughout the country, working with the major Negro people's organizations, can guarantee victory for the farm laborers in this

struggle. Here are things to be done now:

Telegrams, resolutions from union locals, NAACP branches, churches and other groups should be sent to Attorney General Herbert Brownell demanding that he drop the frame-up charges against the leaders of the National Agricultural Workers Union, AFL.

Encouragement should be given the Packinghouse Workers Union, CIO, and the Agricultural Workers Union, AFL, to get together and complete the organizing of the 40,000 sugar workers in Louisiana before the next harvest.

The national CIO—Political Action Committee and the AFL Labor's League for Political Education—should give more attention and leadership to advancing the right-to-vote movement in the rural South. This will help further labor-Negro-farmer unity for the very important Congressional elections in 1954.

First Hand Report on the World Peace Movement

By Louis Wheaton, Asia — Rev. John Darr, Europe

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 1954 — 8:00 P.M.

at 77 FIFTH AVENUE (near 16th Street)

Auspices: AMERICAN VETERANS FOR PEACE

Subscription: 50 cents

Refreshments

A Conversation from Life

By ALICE CHILDRESS

Marge, I don't usually interfere with strangers on the street and neither do I butt my nose into people's business, cause folks have been known to get killed on account of that sort of thing, and I want to be around here for a long time to come . . . but as the man says, it's the exception that proves the rule.

Girl, I'm not interested in how much you spent on your Christmas presents, 'cause that money is as gone as yesterday's snow, I don't care how you figure it. Let's talk about now. . . . Of course I liked my present, and by the way, how did you know I needed a sequin bed jacket. . . . Well, you sure are a good guesser because I know I never mentioned it!

Getting back to my story, when I was comin' home from work this evenin' I passed one of them step-ladder speakers, and I mean to tell you he had some lot of people standin' around listenin' to him. There he was just a-wavin' his arms and hollerin' real loud 'bout food prices bein' so high and the bus and subway fares goin' up, and honey that cold weather wind was whippin' his coat tail to a frazzle, so I thought to myself, "If he got the gumption to stand on that cold corner and talk, I'll have the grace to stay with him awhile. . . .

Well, he did right well, although I figured he jumped around too much instead of stickin' to one subject. . . . You know what I mean. He'd talk about Jim Crow a bit and just when you got interested in hearin' all about that, he'd go talkin' about unemployment, and then on top of that he was talkin' too long, and I got to go to work in the mornin', so as much as I wanted to hear it all, I had to leave. . . .

No, Marge! I didn't tell him all that! I just left peaceable and quiet. . . . Well, another woman was leavin' at the same time and I heard her grumble, "If he don't like it here, why don't he go somewhere else!" I turned around to look at her and she looked a whole lot better than she sounded, so I said to her, "You better wish he stays

right here, if you know what's good for you."

"Well," she says, "if he's discontented he oughta go where he'll be content; after all, everybody ain't dissatisfied!" Since she was travellin' in my direction I walked right along beside her. "Listen here, lady," I says, "You work eight hours a day instead of twelve or fourteen because a gang of dissatisfied folks raised sand until they made it a law, and if they had all gone somewhere else you would still be on the job now instead of on your way home for supper.

"Discontented brothers and sisters made little children go to school instead of workin' in the factory. . . . A whole lot of angry, discontented women fixed things so that we women-folk could vote. . . . All these different denominations of churches were set up because folks were discontented with one or another of them. . . . Look at these housing projects—they were built because some folks were fightin' mad about livin' in slums. . . . And you get paid a certain amount or money per hour 'cause folks were discontented with less, and if you belong to a union you know full well that it wasn't started by folks that loved their bosses.

"Another thing . . . public schools were not started by parents who were content with private ones. . . . Why, whoever invented a washing machine must have figured that an awful lot of women were discontented with washin' boards . . . and when it comes to your remarkin' the fact that everybody ain't dissatisfied, all I can say is there was a whole gang of folks who didn't think Social Security or Unemployment Insurance was necessary, but try to take it away from them now that they've got it, and you'll hear a different tone!"

. . . No, Marge, she didn't get mad. All she said was, "My, I never looked at it that way, I guess you're right." We parted good friends and the last thing I told her was, "When we get peace in the world it will only go to prove my point: people are sure discontented and dissatisfied with war!"

. . . That's right, Marge! Why if man was content to walk there would be no airplanes or trains! Girl, some people spend a lot of time fightin' advancement, but after all the Good Book says, "Who-so loveth instruction loveth knowledge; but he that hateth reproof is brutish."

DuBOIS CALLS FOR AMNESTY

Smith Act Seeks to Stop Thinking, Leads to a Fascist Dictatorship

By W. E. B. DuBOIS

In the world today there are grave and deep differences of opinion concerning the way in which wealth is to be produced, distributed and controlled. There is no way by which thought and action on this matter can be stopped. It is possible, of course, to make thinking on the subject dangerous, but that again is dangerous not only to certain opinions, it is dangerous to the whole structure of democracy.

The so-called Smith Act in the United States, as well as many other laws in this and other countries, in other eras, have tried particularly to prevent thought concerning the production of wealth and its distribution. This has proven impossible.

If the people of the world and particularly of the United States really understood the facts of the case and knew what was in dispute, there is no doubt but what peaceful progress could be made toward the solution of problems of poverty, of health, of education, of enjoyment of the gifts of the world. But because so many people are interested in the present organization of production and distribution of wealth and are comfortable and powerful because of it, we have the mistake of widespread and continuous effort to stop people from thinking, to stop them from knowing, to stop them from doing what is perfectly legal to do in order to make this a better world.

Smith Act Controls Thought

This is continually happening and is happening in the United States in our day. In our day we have had people who have thought earnestly and carefully, who have studied hard in order to understand why it is that in a rich nation like this country, with so many people of ability and energy, we still have so much poverty, ignorance and disease. And these people believe, and believe earnestly that we can correct these evils in peaceful effort.

The Smith Act has made thought of this sort and experiments of this kind illegal, then they have punished and are threatening to punish people because of this.

Advocates of Abundance

The United States 90 years ago found it wise, after differences of opinion which led to disaster, to refuse to contemplate the punishment of the people who did think and who did fight for what was wrong and was proven wrong.

[Note: Dr. DuBois, in the earlier section of his remarks points out that the greatest example of amnesty in U.S. history was the refusal of the government to prosecute Jefferson Davis and other leaders of the Confederacy who had unleashed the Civil War to perpetuate Negro slavery.]

How much more should we today grant amnesty to those who in peace and by demo-



Benjamin J. Davis

(His jailing a disgrace to the country)

cratic methods believe what we are convinced is right; whose thought does not involve violence, and without whose careful experimentation and study of the facts of the world, we cannot possibly arrive at a decent and successful conclusion.

What the victims of the Smith Act try to say is that it is of the highest importance that the people of the United States should understand the technical processes of producing wealth, the reasons and lack of reason for its present distribution, the ways in which that distribution can be made more just and less a matter of chance, crime and selfishness; that they should not only think of this but that they should have a chance to tell their fellow-beings what they think; and that the nation should become convinced that under these circumstances to try to punish such people, to try to stop thinking, to try to make this a country of fascist dictatorship where there is no difference of opinion, is exactly the way to ruin every step we have taken toward building a new and great and free land.

Davis Chose Struggle

I am not personally acquainted with all or with most of those who are today suffering martyrdom for their opinions. But one man I do know, and I want to mention him tonight, and that is Ben Davis. I knew his father, who edited a newspaper in Atlanta, Georgia, while I was teaching there in the university. He was a fearless and forceful man. He gave his son every advantage, and young Ben Davis went through the schools well-dressed, well-nourished, with time to study and know this world. He could

have become, as so many young men who have his advantages do become, an easy-going man who did little work and had little serious thought; who lived his life largely upon what his father had accumulated. But this young Ben Davis did not do. He became a worker and a thinker. He was unusually sincere. He never thought of his own advantage as apart from that of his own people and of the working class.

I did not see him for many years after he left Atlanta University. But when I did meet him at one of the Communist Party dinners, I was especially struck by his sincerity and devotion. Then I saw him in action in the City Council of New York. I heard him speak and I read what he wrote. Nobody considering Ben Davis as a man and as a leader could by any stretch of imagination think of him as guilty of anything but what this nation ought to reward and give the broadest chance for development. They need not necessarily follow him in all his opinions, but they must applaud the man who, having the chance to be idle and careless, becomes busy, thoughtful and devoted, and gives his life to the great cause of changing the methods of production and distribution of wealth in this country and in the world.

National Disgrace

Instead of this, Ben Davis is in jail. In jail he suffers not only what all prisoners must go through, but the added discrimination which comes from the fact that he is of Negro descent. For a man in the prime of life and in the enthusiasm of deeply held beliefs, to be thus thrust into isolation and disgrace, is one of the most horrible of fates. It should never happen in a country which calls itself free and which tries to be great. It is to the disgrace of this country that Ben Davis ever went to jail or that he is kept there now.

(Excerpts from a speech delivered by Dr. DuBois at a New York rally for amnesty for Smith Act victims, December 17, 1953.)

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