

Negro Youth of Southland Maps Its Fight for Rights

Historic Conference in Richmond Seen New Challenge

By Angelo Herndon

The dawn of a new day for the Negro is on the horizon.

The 534 youthful delegates at the Southern Youth Conference held in Richmond last Saturday and Sunday wrote a new chapter—a new proclamation—in the long, tedious, blood-stained struggle of the Negro people for emancipation.

It was evident from the very outset of this historic meeting that the delegates came organized and imbued with the determination to shatter to bits the shackles and fetters that bind the Negro people.

As they poured into Richmond from Louisiana, Mississippi, Georgia, Alabama, the Carolinas and other Southern states, these challenging words of Patrick Henry seemed to hang over the city: "Give me liberty or give me death!"

A PROGRAM OF ACTION

There was a sad graveness and heaviness of heart and mind that weighed down like lead upon the delegates as they looked with deep foreboding across the street from the steps of the First Street Baptist Church at the awful and weird spectacle of Negro workers—brutalized and warned by a cruel and unjust society. There was humbled before their eyes, the drab, uniform life; the dire poverty and wretchedness of the Negro in Richmond, which was so vividly portrayed by the weather-beaten, caving-in shacks that stood like great church spires against the gray, sunny sky.

It was nothing unusual for the delegates, for they knew, that throughout the South the plight of all Negroes is identically the same. What was so unique about it all was that it took on a symbolic meaning; the reaffirmation of their life purpose which they came to rededicate to the end that peonage and debt slavery, lynching and segregation would be cast away into the dark jungle pits of medieval darkness with all the other evil and corruption of a decaying society.

To arrive at a comprehensive and intelligent program of action, the conference elected a resolutions committee, a presiding committee and then split up into discussion groups. The latter included: (1) Youth on the Job, discussion leader, Mr. Columbus Alston, Richmond; (2) Youth as a Citizen, discussion leader, Mr. Lorenzo D. Bennett, Jr., instructor in the Lincoln Park Academy, Fort Pierce, Florida; (3) Youth as a Student, leader, Mr. James E. Jackson, Richmond; (4) Youth and Social Integration, leader, Mr. William Y. Bell, Jr., Washington, D. C.; (5) Youth and Social Basis of Interracial Understanding, leader, Mr. Cy W. Record, white, University of Texas.

CITIZENSHIP DENIED

Addressing the delegates on Youth as a Citizen, Mr. Lorenzo D. Bennett, Jr., stated: "One who is free as a citizen must enjoy the rights granted him by the Constitution and invariably protected by same. It appears that the amendments written into the Constitution to protect the rights of the Negro, are merely clauses to occupy space. Hence the Negro cannot be called a free man with rights of citizenship when terror bands, Ku Kluxers exist for the purpose of keeping him enslaved. No civil rights can be obtained when citizenship is denied."

Bennett further pointed out that in 1886, Johnson Gibbs, a Negro, was elected Lt. Governor of Florida, and it was not long until he died from poisoning.

So intensive was the election campaign among Negroes in 1920, he said, that their power became a threat and challenge to the white exploiters. There was a real possibility of electing a Negro to the office of governor of the state. However, on election day, all voting polls in the Negro sections in the state were closed down. By nightfall in Coacuchee, Fla., there was not a single Negro to be found. Those who had not been lynched or flogged abandoned all hope and fled for their lives. Since then any Negro entering Coacuchee does so at the risk of his life.

As a further excuse to terrorize the Negro and perpetuate the slave system, the two cities, Fort Lauderdale, and Miami, have recently enacted repressive laws calling for the fingerprinting of all domestic servants. Ostensibly, such a law is supposed to include white as well as Negro domestics. But obviously it is aimed at the Negro since the majority of such workers are Negroes.

GIVE SHARECROPPER REPORTS

All delegates were electrified when a Negro girl sharecropper from Alabama rose to speak about the plight of the sharecroppers. She spoke with strong conviction and told a touching story of how the sharecroppers are robbed by the landlords and how children are forced into child labor. It was painful to listen to the dramatic and forceful way she told the story of how the children of the Negro sharecroppers are denied educational facilities and forced to grow up in a coarse, vicious world of ignorance.

Suffice it to say that not only were there such facts presented before the historic conference, but there was the challenge and call for action laid down by Mr. Audrex of Baltimore: "God will take care of thee. . . . But God will take care of those who help to take care of themselves. The Negro has been waiting piously for over three hundred years for some kind of a windfall from heaven. But I ask you, how long will it take the Negro to



ANGELO HERNDON

wake up and assert his manhood rights for a human and decent livelihood?"

During the evening the following speakers addressed more than 2,000 persons: W. F. Richardson, chairman, Milton L. Randolph, Secretary Richmond Committee; Edward E. Strong, National Youth Chairman, National Negro Congress; Martin L. Harvey, President, Christian Youth Council of North America, Max Yeagan, Secretary South Africa Work of the International Committee of the YMCA, and Dr. E. Franklin Frazier, Department of Sociology, Howard University.

All of the speakers paid tribute to the courage of southern Negro youth. Mr. Edward Strong struck the keynote of the conference when he stated amidst prolonged applause:

"The New Negro youth of the southland is rising to manhood without the right to vote—for him we seek opportunity of political expression. And finally, we seek an existence free from the threat of violence, free of judicial caricatures. The responsibility that rests upon us in this hour is great. But we say that unity in action is the road to progress. We have met for freedom, equality, opportunity."

CALLS FOR NEGRO-WHITE UNITY

Dr. Mordecai W. Johnson, President of Howard University, made a

534 Delegates Hear of People's Struggles Against Reaction

stirring speech in which he called for the unity of both Negro and white youth as the only possible way to bring about the new society for freedom and opportunity for all. He lashed out at those whom he termed as being wooed and drawn with suction to the bosom of the exploiter. He pointed out that such people are always to be found in the ranks of the so-called middle class or "upper-crust" and warned the young people of the south to rise up and shake off the fetish which is destroying the whole human race.

Resolutions supporting the American Youth Act, farm legislation, civil liberties—including the right to vote, the freedom of the Scottsboro boys, Herndon, were adopted by the assembly unanimously. The conference pledged itself to fight untiringly to abolish discrimination against Negro youth in industry, education, etc. There were 272 male delegates, 262 female, geographically located as follows: Africa—Sona Bato, Belgian Congo, 1, Alabama 18, Arkansas 2, California 1, Delaware 5, Florida 24, Georgia 6, Illinois 1, Indiana 1, Louisiana 1, Maryland 11, Massachusetts 2, Mississippi 1, New Jersey 3, New York 41, North Carolina 31, Oklahoma 1, Pennsylvania 2, South Carolina 11, Tennessee 4, Texas 6, Virginia 304, Washington, D. C. 44, West Virginia 13.

There were 110 religious organizations represented, 27 fraternal, 21 fraternities, 23 recreational, athletic 1, Boy Scouts 1, Trade Union 16, Social 14, Civic 14, social welfare 65, Miscellaneous 7, girl scouts 15, political 9, women 16, student 108, farm 7, YMCA's 18, YWCA's, 56.

After electing a permanent executive committee with headquarters in Richmond, the proclamation, based on the findings of the conference was read and adopted by the delegates. The proclamation calls upon the youth of the southland to unite in a common struggle with all progressive forces to bring an end at last, to the barbarous system of exploitation of man by man. It is in this declaration of rights that the future, hopes, and aspirations of the Negro people will be realized.

More Than \$408,000 Given Spain by Workers

International Federation of Trade Unions Releases Figures on Fund—U. S. Workers Second Only to British in Amount Sent

More than \$408,000 in American dimes and nickels, English shillings, Swedish kronen, Belgian belga and the coin of other countries has been sent to the Spanish fighters for democracy by workers of many lands through the International Solidarity Fund of the International Federation of Trade Unions.

In a letter by Walter Schevenels, secretary of the I. F. T. U., released here by David Dubinsky, treasurer of Labor's Red Cross for Spain, detailed information is given about the success of the I. F. T. U.'s drive.

The largest sums were contributed to the Fund by the workers of Great Britain, the United States, Sweden and Belgium, with Denmark, Holland, Norway, Czechoslovakia, Palestine, Australia and South Africa filling the rear.

Out of a total of 8,700,000 French francs (\$400,000) collected by the Fund, 2,300,000 francs (\$107,180) were contributed by British workers and 2,200,000 francs (\$102,520) by American workers.

The workers of France and the Soviet Union contributed sums totalling millions of dollars through

their own independent solidarity campaigns.

Until the present time \$178,600 has been expended by the Fund for various types of aid to the Spanish workers. In addition, Iceland, Mexico and Argentina have sent cargoes of fish, flour, corned beef and other foodstuffs directly to Spain.

An important part of the campaign concerns the finding of homes for the Spanish children driven from their homeland by the Fascist destroyers. France, Belgium and Switzerland have been especially active in this phase of the work.

The letter ends with the following statement: "Finally you will appreciate that it is not possible to mention in this circular certain other material assistance which we have been able to give our Spanish comrades."

Defense in Green Murder Of Lynch-Hysteria Local

(Article III)

(This is the concluding article of a series of three on the Green murder trial by Den Davis, Jr., Daily Worker staff writer and prominent Negro attorney, who attended the trial.)

The fact that there was no fight put up for ample time to prepare the defense of Major Green—to examine and check the evidence and track down the various theories of the crime—precluded at the outset possibilities for a fair trial for the accused Negro porter.

The question of change of venue from lynch hysteria-infested Queens—a legal move which this case certainly warranted—was not even argued. This showed extremely weak, if not bad, law practice on the part of the three-man defense battery.

As a common procedure of trial practice, this point should have been vigorously contended.

In view of the open anti-Negro sentiment throughout Queens and the efforts of the State officials to rush the case through amid this sentiment, the result was a foregone conclusion.

NO NEGROES ON JURY

Indeed, the opening statement of Defense Counsel Richard J. Barry, that a Negro had killed a white woman, made it easy for the prosecution to get the desired result—the death verdict.

Likewise with the fact that not a single word was said—no protest raised—about Negroes not serving on Queens juries.

Henry J. Lipscomb, Negro attorney

for Green, said before the trial: "We did not consider raising the question of Negroes on juries. We feel that Green will get a fair trial."

In such cases as the Green trial, where the accusation is that a Negro killed a white woman, the defendant at the very least should have benefit of counsel of his own choosing. Whose fault was it that the defendant was too poor to employ counsel?

The deep social issues involved in the case were only grazed during the process of the trial. Attorney Barry did make a plea against race prejudice, citing contributions of the Negro to civilization.

NEGLECTED SOCIAL ISSUES

"Negroes have shed their blood for America in the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, the Spanish-American War and on Flanders Field," Barry, said, addressing the jury. "They have been emancipated, but have not yet been placed on a plane with the white race."

But Barry's commendable remarks were not sufficient in this case. He did not dig deep into the social issues involved.

Confronted by the sensational and surprise testimony of the Negro detective John E. Roberts, Barry appeared to lose his head with indignation and did not get much farther than branding him a "stool-pigeon." This left the overwhelming bulk of Roberts' gruesome story unshaken.

DID NOT TAKE STAND

Since the conduct of Green's defense was obviously in the hands of his court-appointed attorneys, his