

The Aframerican WOMAN'S JOURNAL

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The Negro Woman in National Defense

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THE AFRAMERICAN WOMAN'S JOURNAL

(Official Magazine of the National Council of Negro Women, Inc.)

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NATIONAL DEFENSE ISSUE, 1941

VOLUME II

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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Women's Bureau

Washington

August 18, 1941.

To: Mrs. Mary McLeod Bethune
For: National Council of Negro Women, Inc.
Washington, D. C.

MY DEAR MRS. BETHUNE:

It has come to my attention that the forthcoming issue of your magazine, THE AFRAMERICAN WOMAN'S JOURNAL, will be devoted to the problems and accomplishments of Negro Women in National Defense. I am deeply gratified. This information should throw a great deal of light on the progress that has been made in mobilizing the human resources of this vast country of ours. I am hoping that a copy of the JOURNAL finds its way into the hands of every person connected with the defense program, where it cannot fail to serve as a stimulus for greater effort on the home front.

I shall also hope that a copy of the JOURNAL comes into the possession of every Negro woman worker, for the splendid work that you and your group are doing and the scope, strength, and vision of your program is a story that cannot be told too often. In fact, I would go even farther and say, that it is almost imperative that every Negro woman—wherever she may be—know of the opportunity for making a "lasting contribution to all that is finest and best in America" that is extended to her in the organizational strength of the National Council of Negro women.

My best wishes for your success during the coming year.

Sincerely yours,

MARY ANDERSON, *Director.*

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IN THIS ISSUE

THE AFRAMERICAN WOMAN'S JOURNAL is extremely grateful to the various sources over the country which have made possible the contents of this issue. Annabel Sawyer labored many hours over the report on the Conference on Women in a Democracy. A teacher in the schools of Topeka, Kansas, and sister-in-law of the artist, Aaron Douglas, she was much concerned that the spiritual and esthetic values as such, of the June meeting, be properly regarded.

Several trips to the offices of the Works Progress Administration, the Department of Labor—Women's Bureau, the N. Y. A. and O. P. M. research divisions, and the Library of Congress, yielded these materials on the Negro woman as a worker and the latest reports and releases on the Negro woman in National Defense.

We are indebted to the vigilant McNeil Studios, for the photograph on the cover page of Willa Brown, remarkable aviatrix and teacher of aeronautics in Chicago, consulting with Robert H. Hinckley, assistant secretary of Commerce in charge of Civil Aeronautics Administration, in Washington last spring. The result of her work is reported under recent press releases given elsewhere in this issue.

Jean Collier Brown of the staff of the Women's Bureau and the industrial department of the National Y. W. C. A., contributed several of the illustrations covering the Negro woman in a wide range of industrial and professional employment. Mrs. Brown is the only one of our number of JOURNAL readers who had the pleasure of actually sampling the elegant cake which graces page 29.

If this issue meets the needs of those who wish to know and recognize how important is the contribution of Negro women to the making of American Democracy, the editor, and staff of the National Council of Negro women, send it forth as the most purposeful issue of 1941.

SUE BAILEY THURMAN.

The Negro Woman in National Defense

Summary of Conference Held at Howard University, June 28 to 30, 1941

BY ANNABEL SAWYER*

MOTIVATED by mounting discriminatory practices against women generally, and Negro women specifically, the Washington committee for THE NEGRO WOMAN IN NATIONAL DEFENSE was organized. This committee was called by Miss Norma E. Boyd, National Chairman of the Non-Partisan Council on Public Affairs of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority and Mrs. Mary McLeod Bethune, President of the NATIONAL COUNCIL OF NEGRO WOMEN. Because they were aware of the tragedy that has overtaken minorities in other countries of the world, it seemed highly expedient to these women to issue a Nation-wide Call to all Negro women's organizations to send their delegates to assemble in Washington for a conference on ways and means of improving the social, economic, and political status of the Negro woman through her participation in the program of National Defense. In view of the struggle in which the world is now engaged for maintenance of the Democratic ideal and the tremendous stake Negro women must have in its outcome, the Nation-wide Call was issued. Women from forty-three national organizations responded in convention at Howard University, June 28 to 30, 1941, and studied Defense planning and the Negro woman's relationship thereto.

As stated in the Call, the aims of the conference were:

1. To discover ways and means through which Negro women should aid in the protection of America from external dangers and set up precedents by means of which true democracy may be maintained within.

2. To provide for the integration of Negro workers according to their training and skill in all phases of the national defense program.

3. To seek the placement of qualified Negroes on policy making committees and boards so that racial problems may receive due consideration in the light of diverse needs.

4. To secure health provisions for all Americans: good food, adequate hospital facilities, and sanitary living conditions that will permit vigorous physical development, basic to any efficient performance.

The conference in session revealed many inadequacies in our approach to National Defense recognizing at the same time some comprehensive attempts to appropriate the resources of the nation in the present emergency.

*Mid-western Regional Chairman, Non-Partisan Council on Public Affairs, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority.

The following problems were considered in the three day session:

TRAINING, EMPLOYMENT, AND ORGANIZED LABOR

The problem of training and employment in defense is a tremendous one. We have a shortage of apprentices which the N.Y.A., the W.P.A., and industrial Plant Training and Apprenticeship programs are attempting to correct.

In the whole training and apprenticeship field very few trades are followed by women apprentices. Apprenticeship opportunities are being investigated so that some plan may be devised for the inclusion of women. Opportunities for apprenticeships of any kind are limited, especially for Negroes where no ratio has yet been established.

There are three classifications of job opportunities for women in national defense: (1) unskilled—airplane, munitions, and arsenal plants where women will be taken on as workers to do a certain kind of machine work; (2) skilled—where a knowledge of power machine operation will be required; (3) clerical and stenographic—in government and private defense plants.

Negroes have been benefited by union membership, but Negro women have been reluctant to join unions or encourage their men to belong to them. Union affiliation is highly desirable because of the alertness of labor organizations as to social, economic, and political problems. The exclusion of domestic and agricultural workers from Social Security is detrimental to the moral, physical, and economic welfare of the nation. Organized labor may help in the solution of this problem.

HEALTH, HOUSING, RECREATION, AND CONSUMER NEEDS

The Negro is not the major health problem of America but inherits every health problem known to the nation as a whole. These problems are not necessarily peculiar to the Negro, but are intensified in his experience by lack of facilities, social conditions, low economic status, poor knowledge of community and personal hygiene, and material care. The major health menaces of America are found to be venereal diseases, tuberculosis, infant and maternal mortality, and malnutrition. The economic factor is the major problem. Upon its solution depends the improved health condition of the nation.

Housing, for instance, is concomitant to the preven-

tion of malnutrition, tuberculosis, infant and maternal mortality, venereal diseases, juvenile delinquency, immorality and crime. About 18,000 Negroes throughout the United States have been recently housed in the dwelling projects, so it seems that the Housing program is making an approach to the needs of this particular low income group. This program not only contributes to the morale and general health, but provides a means of participation for Negroes on its planning boards and in work programs. Every Housing plan includes adequate recreation facilities for the inhabitants of the improved dwelling project.

Consumer education may help people to discover new techniques for the improvement of health, housing and recreational need. Defense production has brought about the necessity for readjustment in the use of materials vital to defense, however, adequate substitutes for these materials have been made available. The Office of Price Administration and Civilian Supply is concerned with price control, expansion of supply for, and distribution to consumers, and the consumer's protection. With the aid of O.P.A.C.S. bulletins, the consumer may learn to spend money wisely and work through cooperatives to increase his purchasing power. (Bulletins may be secured from the O.P.A.C.S., Washington, D. C.)

FARM SECURITY

"Farming is both a business and a way of life for half of all the Negroes in America," according to a study made by Mrs. Constance Daniels of the Farm Security Administrations. Ninety-five per cent of this number are farm operators living in the South, with more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of them tenants. Half the number of all share croppers are Negroes. The total number of Negro share croppers exceeds that of white croppers in Georgia, South Carolina, Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi. Consequently, Negro children of share croppers growing to manhood and womanhood face the drudgery, neglect and privation typical of all croppers' children plus the added handicap of discriminations because of race.

Farm Security has been a stepping stone toward a new lease on life for approximately 50,000 Negro farm families. The F.S.A. is attempting to develop social and economic patterns in agriculture through the establishing of homestead projects. More than 1,800 Negro families are living on such projects. Rental cooperatives, Debt Adjustment Service, Migratory labor camps, the relocation of farmers situated on submarginal land, and aid to rural education are a part of the Farm Security Administration program.

To preserve the vitality of human resources of the nation through assistance and guidance to farming people in the use of the natural resources over which they have control, is the problem of the Farm Security Administration. The agency realizes that there can be little real national security unless a means is found to secure and

stabilize the lives of the lowest income families of the country of which the Negro is a significant part.

WOMEN'S BUREAU OF THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

The Women's Bureau has sent agents into seven factories on the Atlantic Seaboard, filling defense contracts, in order to observe their employment practices. Approximately 100,000 workers were employed in these seven plants; in three there were no women employed, and in the other four only a fraction of one per cent. The need for workers in defense industries is mounting by leaps and bounds. Already in certain areas there is approaching an anticipated shortage of male labor, skilled or semi-skilled. In an effort to mobilize all the nation's resources it is essential that some plan be made for the intelligent use of "woman power." While some gains have been made in restricted employment areas there is still needed an extensive training program for women.

It has been discovered that women do well in industry—where (1) care, alertness, and little physical exertion is required; (2) manipulative skill; (3) where skill rather than strain is required, and on large machines employing the use of lifts. There is also the matter of "secondary defense" in which women can make a lasting contribution, such as: (1) Conservation, (2) Child Care, (3) Sanitation and (4) Clothing.

One of the chief difficulties with which Negro women are concerned is the lack of well trained people to fill places, and so we are likely to be embarrassed unless we can begin immediately to supply sufficient trainees. While the women of America are mobilizing for inclusion in the defense program, definite recognition should be given to the mutual problems of Negro and white women alike so that both groups may share in the economic and social gains to be derived from any solution of the total problem.

CIVIL LIBERTIES

Civil liberties of persons in the United States, citizens and non-citizens, are defined in the major documents of our land, yet there are certain limitations set up for all residents. The Negro suffers from wide-spread violation of these legal safeguards more than any other group. Chief among these violations are his right to security of life, person, and property, together with an absence of a general belief that the Creator has endowed him with any equal rights common to his fellows. His security of life is violated by lynching; his security of person by assault in lynching and in other ways; his security of property, in instances where property bought and occupied in restricted areas becomes the target for destruction by the mob.

Freedom of speech and ideas, the right to work, the privilege of travel without the humiliation of segregated conveyances and accommodations, are all basic pillars of privilege in a democracy. The price of democracy in America has now become the degree of willingness to

which America enforces the Civil liberties of Negroes and every other minority group.

In this period of unlimited emergency it is more easily possible to create an uninformed public opinion that will not only permit suppression of civil liberties, but will take no notice of them. There arises, therefore, a necessity for the education of American people to the idea that America is a democracy, a composite of the contributions of many nations and races. During periods of prosperity, there are not so many problems involving civil liberties; but the struggle to preserve civil liberties now merges in the basic rights for democratic liberties. We have then to create an intelligent, enlightened public opinion that will militantly oppose the restriction of these American principles for every group be it labor, education, employment, or racial minorities.

YOUTH

The youth of America looks with apprehension upon the rapid and ominous development of war in the world. In order to defend democracy effectively youth appeals for support to all organizations of their own, and to the labor and farm movements, for a program safeguarding the welfare, security, and morale of youth in the armed forces of our nation. There are already 1,500,000 young men under arms and in training camps, these to be followed by other trainees. The welfare and morale of these youth is of vital concern to all Americans.

RECOMMENDATIONS

I. *Health, Housing, Recreation and Consumer Problems*

The conference recognized that the health and well-being of the people is basic to the defense and maintenance of democratic institutions and that provisions for incomes adequate for the support of health and decency is fundamental to the solution of problems of health, housing, nutrition and related consumer needs. While these problems affect the general population their incidence is highest among those of lowest economic status and particularly among the Negro people.

A COMMUNITY WELFARE

The conference therefore recommended: All support to and cooperation with labor organizations in the extension of free collective bargaining as the most effective and democratic means of raising the income levels of the low income groups; that we oppose reduction of W. P. A., relief and non-defense expenditures giving assistance to sub-standard groups; that we advocate the elimination of federal and local income taxes that bear disproportionately upon the lower income groups.

Since adequate provisions for the protection of jobs, health and safety have been recommended by

1. The White House conference on Children in a Democracy 1940; (Section Children in Minority groups.)

2. The Nutrition Conference, May 1941 (Economic section).

3. The President's Executive Order, June 25, 1941, banning discrimination in defense industries, the conference urged that Negroes be placed on all policy making committees of local, state and federal agencies in order to further implement the benefits to be derived from the recommendations made by these conferences.

B First Aid

1. We propose that all local organizations secure information concerning the establishment of First Aid classes in all communities and organize such classes in communities where they do not exist. (Information may be obtained from the office of Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia, Chairman, Office of Civilian Defense, Washington, D. C.)

2. Volunteers are being called for to receive training that will fit them for air-raid wardens, the conference therefore suggests that Negro women volunteer for this service immediately.

3. Hospitalization. Adequate hospitalization is requisite to the maintenance of efficiency, sound health practices, and the reduction of the infant and maternal mortality rate. Therefore, the conference pledged its support to the immediate passage of the Senate Bill S. 1230, which will create a federal fund for hospitals.

C Housing and Recreation.

1. The conference urged local organizations to contact the Chairman of the Housing Division of the State Defense Council and request a survey of housing conditions and changing rents with the object of providing adequate housing facilities, particularly for the lowest income groups through the construction of new federal housing projects and measures for rent control through the state and local boards.

2. It is further recommended that adequate recreational facilities be included in every housing program, that allocation of housing facilities be made without discrimination because of race, creed or color and on the basis of economic need rather than on the basis of the percentage which any racial group bears to the total population.

D Nutrition and Consumer Education

1. Organized labor through its many local organizations can assist in the survey of low income families. The conference therefore recommends that such a survey be made so that higher wages may be obtained and nutritional deficiencies met.

2. Local groups may secure from the Consumer Division, Office of Price Administration and Civilian Supply, pertinent information that may be used to provide instruction in Consumer Education. The conference further recommends that such material be secured.

3. It is recommended that all persons cooperate with local organizations concerned with Consumer Problems

in investigating and reporting sharp rises in prices in all commodities, to local officials and the Office of Price Administration and Civilian Supply, Washington, D. C., for the purpose of taking appropriate action to curb price increases, to secure investigation, and to control monopolies engaged in the manufacture and distribution of Consumer goods.

4. Be it further recommended that all local groups petition the Department of Agriculture to introduce the following measures for supplementing the diets of low income families in the communities where these measures are not yet in force.

- a. Distribution of penny milk and nickel milk.
- b. Free lunches for school children.
- c. Food stamp plan.

II. *Organized Labor and Training for Employment in Defense Industries*

The Conference recommended:

1. That committees be formed from this conference to survey and report upon the enforcement of the President's executive order of June 25, 1941, designed to eliminate discrimination in Defense industries, and to cooperate with other groups active in seeing that defense industries comply with the order.

2. That we urge the support of National legislation for the inclusion of Household and Agricultural workers and workers in Non-Profit organizations under the Social Security Act.

3. That we call upon all Trade Unions, and their Women's Auxiliaries, practicing discrimination against women, particularly Negro women, to eliminate this un-American practice and join with all progressive organized labor in supporting the nation-wide appeal for jobs for Negro women in National Defense.

4. In view of the fact that an executive ruling regarding discrimination has existed since May 1940, we recommend that Government contracts be withdrawn from companies with Defense contracts that discriminate against workers because of race, creed or color.

5. We advocate the elimination of all discrimination against Negroes in Governmental service and in the armed forces of the Nation.

6. The Negro workers receive equal pay and equal work in all Defense projects.

7. That the government consider seriously the problem of placement of persons over 40 years of age.

8. That contact committees be formed so that women in local communities may ally themselves with all movements now established in their respective communities for the purpose of obtaining and disseminating information from the proceedings of all Civilian Defense Committees.

III. *Training and Employment in Defense Industries—*

The Conference recommended:

1. That information concerning training and employment opportunities supported by Federal Government be secured from the state or local offices of:

- (a) N. Y. A.
- (b) W. P. A.
- (c) Employment Service.

2. That communities through the press, platform and radio, sponsor an educational program that shall create a wholesome respect for the dignity of labor, as well as pride in promptness, honor and efficiency on the job.

3. That communities work to increase opportunities for vocational training provided in cooperation with public schools through—

- (a) School training.
- (b) Part-time apprenticeship training.

Youth—

We recommend that the program which should be adopted at the forthcoming American Youth Congress to be held in Philadelphia, Pa., July 4 to 6 be reported to the Findings Committee of the conference and circulated among the delegates and affiliated organizations.

Be it further recommended that Miss Pauline Myers, of Richmond, Virginia, be commissioned as our representative to fulfill the instructions as outlined above.

Civil Liberties—

Fully cognizant of the fact that theoretically the rights and privileges of *All the People* are protected by the Bill of Rights, and the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments of our Constitution, we are none the less aware of the many varied and subtle means of restriction that have been and are now operating in every area of American life to the detriment and deprivation of the Negro worker. The Negro Woman's Committee for Democracy in National Defense regrets that millions of our race are disfranchised and unable to protect themselves in that section of our land where the great majority live. We therefore recommend:

1. That local organizations be urged to acquaint themselves with legislative enactments which have been created for their protection, so that they may intelligently employ every agency at their disposal, that through such activity these laws may actually function as provided.

That this conference go on record as supporting the—

- (1) Geyer, Anti-Poll Tax Bill.
- (2) Gavagan, Anti-Lynch Bill.
- (3) Marcantonio Anti-Discrimination Bill.

2. We further recommend that local organizations be urged to send communications to their Congressmen and Senators enlisting the support of such representatives for the immediate passage of these bills.

3. Because of the increasing war hysteria, we urge the attention of the people of America to a solemn re-dedication to the principles of Democracy as embodied in the Bill of Rights and the Constitution of the United States, and further to reaffirm their determination to maintain academic freedom. That we go on record as strongly opposing the action of the Board of Higher Education of the City of New York in the dismissal of the eminent educator, Max Yergan.

Excerpts from Conference Panel Discussions

1. EMPLOYMENT AND PLACEMENT OF WOMEN IN NATIONAL DEFENSE INDUSTRIES

Miss Mae Hawes, presiding.

"I thought it might be of interest to you to know a few facts about our first speaker, Miss Mary Anderson. She was born in Sweden and came to this country at an early date. For 16 or 18 years she served as a machine operator in a shoe factory. At that time, she worked in the National Trade Union League and became one of the organizers of that league. She was called from that work to Washington during the last World War to serve on the National Council for Defense, representing women in industry. Since that time she has been with the Women's Bureau in the Department of Labor. I think it is very timely that we should hear from Miss Anderson, who is a recognized authority on all problems and conditions of women's work in the United States."

MISS MARY ANDERSON:

I am very glad indeed to be here this morning and discuss with you the stand women are taking in national defense industries. I am told that the Office of Production Management has just released to all fac-

tories and plants working on defense contracts a new poster. It reads: "Time is Short." A simple statement, isn't it? But consider it for a moment and the full meaning and implication will strike you with disturbing force.

Yes, time is short. And we must act upon that knowledge. In the interest of national unity our personal differences, our minor dissatisfactions must be put aside. Our entire industrial make-up must be reslanted, even more, in order to provide facilities for the unprecedented production of armaments. From time to time the civilian population must do without certain items in order to assure an uninterrupted flow of raw materials to plants and factories manufacturing military equipment. Above all, we must intelligently and thoughtfully use our greatest single resource, our millions of working men and women.

By this I do not mean to intimate that we have been negligent or unthinking in our defense effort so far. As a matter of fact in the year that has elapsed since the launching of the program, extraordinary progress has been made. But, with the passing of each week the shape and scope of our problem enlarges and acquires new emphasis. Every military engagement poses the question of new weapons or the improvement of existing weapons. What was thought adequate even 90 days ago is now seen to be less than that.

A short time ago we looked at our labor force and assumed that we had an unbounded supply of human skill and talent. Then as workers in increasing numbers began to take their places on production lines, we weren't sure. The Selective Service System and the increased demand for workers in all kinds of enterprises further reduced the number of individuals available for employment in defense industries. The President's request that "critical machinery" in defense industries be used to the maximum is an additional factor accentuating the need for increasing the labor supply.

Of course, so to speak we are not scraping bottom yet. As you very well know there is still a considerable backlog of unemployed in this country. But the point is that the need for workers in defense industries is mounting by leaps and bounds. Already in certain areas there is approaching an anticipated shortage of male labor, skilled or semi-skilled. Obviously, if we are to avoid industrial shut-downs or slow-downs on this account we must mobilize all our human resources.

Such a plan it seems to me must have as one of its essentials the intelligent use of woman power. Notice that I said "intelligent use of woman power." As proud as I am of the ability of women to do whatever task falls to their lot in an emergency, I believe firmly that they



BENNETT COLLEGE STUDENTS PREPARE TO ASSIST IN NUTRITIONAL AND CONSUMER EDUCATION

should work on those processes for which their skills and muscular strength best fit them.

There's no mystery as to what these processes are. The Women's Bureau as soon as the time was opportune, sent agents to visit a number of factories on the Atlantic seaboard filling orders for defense materials. We viewed all kinds of processes, analyzing the effort involved and the skill required. We talked to foremen and plant managers asking about their women workers, how many they had, what kinds of jobs they were doing, the quality of their performance, and so forth. We found out many things. In plants making engines for aircrafts, women were doing inspection work. Machine tool factories employed women for various kinds of bench work, inspecting and packing. Manufacturers of shells, cartridges, and firearms had women operating punch presses, assembling primers to shells on dial presses, running machines for drawing cups for shells. In instrument making plants, women were doing a large number of light jobs, hand finishing and packing certain parts.

Although the results of this study were especially gratifying we didn't stop at this point. In order to find out what women can do in defense production it is necessary to constantly keep a finger on the industrial pulse of the nation. Accordingly, several weeks ago we sent our representatives into aircraft assembly plants to find out what was happening on that front. Seven plants were visited. Every step in the complicated job of building air frames and putting together aircraft was viewed. There wasn't a process that escaped our attention. We were watching when the planes were only sheets of metal on factory trucks. We were watching when the metal was cut out and formed to specified sizes and shapes for the fuselages, control surfaces, wings, cowlings, etc.; then machined, and further processed and sent to be assembled. We were watching when the planes took final shape as the bulkheads, ribs, metal surfaces, windshields, cabins, tails, wings, engines and so forth were brought together.

Most of the employees that we saw were men. While there are approximately 100,000 workers in the seven plants investigated, in three there are no women employed and in the other four only a fraction of one per cent. The few women who are employed are working chiefly in the sewing of covers for rudders, wing tabs, and other control surfaces, and a smaller number were making parts before painting and doing minor jobs on electrical assemblies, wrapping and identifying gas lines. But this isn't particularly significant, for there has been a great demand on the part of men for aircraft jobs, and vocational trade schools in this connection have been more readily accessible to men than women.

What is significant is that a close examination of all the processes revealed that in every department of the aircraft industry, as now organized there are varying proportions of occupations on which women may be



EXECUTIVE OF AN IMPORTANT OFFICE IN THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

employed as the industry expands. Naturally in all departments there are jobs that are not suitable for women, either because the work is beyond their strength or because the work requires lengthy experience and training which the emergency will not permit. As a conservative estimate it seems reasonable that at least one-fourth to one-third of the jobs in the aircraft assembly plants might be filled satisfactorily by women. It should be pointed out that in Germany and Great Britain at the present time reports indicate that 40 to 50 per cent of the employees are women.

Shortly after the Bureau finished its investigation of aircraft factories an analysis of small arms ammunition plants was undertaken. While bullets don't bulk as large as planes, they, too, have their complexities and numerous parts.

Once more we observed all of the processes very carefully. We followed the making of a bullet from the moment it began as a tiny metal slug until it emerged in a shiny cartridge case, complete with propelling charge and primer.

Here although we found a high proportion of women workers in one plant, approximately 40 per cent of the productive workers were women, we feel that employment of women could be greatly extended. In the manufacturing of the bullet itself, women could operate the machines which form the metal jackets for the cores. Women might also do all the trimming of bullet jackets. While tracer bullets require a few extra flourishes these, too, could be done by women although there are certain conditions of employment which would require that women of more than average strength and stability be selected.

In the operation of the automatic screw machines turning the heads of the cartridge cases women could be used almost entirely. All the different processes which go into

making the primer—everything except blanking it—could be done exclusively by women. Women could also be used altogether in inspection—visual gage, and machine—and their proportion could be increased in cartridge and packing and labeling.

Despite the tedious terminology used you can see that this is an impressive list of employment openings. I wish I could give you some figures on how many women might be employed in such jobs, but they just aren't available. However, the possibilities are almost limitless when you realize that a single airplane in firing action equipped with eight or more machine guns is reported as pouring out a stream of 1,200 pounds of ammunition a minute from each gun. With tens of thousands of planes carrying machine guns, the demand for small arms ammunition is very large.

I also want to give you as much information as is available concerning the Negro woman and employment in defense industries. First of all the Bureau of Employment Security reports that the registration of Negro women looking for work is declining. Whether this means that those individuals are finding employment in defense industries or in other pursuits is a question.

Not to be overlooked is the stimulating effect of the money that is pouring into circulation through defense workers' pay envelopes on industries and services that have nothing whatever to do with military preparedness. Hotels, restaurants, laundries, department stores and other businesses too numerous to mention are employing colored female help in increasing numbers. The number of Negro girls operating elevators, for instance, is steadily growing.

The other day our Labor Advisory Committee—a committee recently appointed and composed of members of key unions in the defense industries met in Washington. I asked them what the outlook was for the Negro woman worker. The representative of the United Automobile Workers pointed out that they had a good many Negro members in their ranks with the same rights and privileges as other members. The delegate from the United Rubber Workers made a similar statement. I need scarcely remind you that the International Ladies Garment Workers Union of America and the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America pursue the same policy. Within these two groups there is no racial discrimination, white and colored members participate in organizational, educational, and social activities on a basis of complete equality.

Unfortunately there is evidence that in some defense industries employment has been denied applicants because of racial considerations. No one deplored this more than I do. However, I do believe that the forthright action of President Roosevelt in ordering that there shall be no discrimination in vocational and training programs and that all defense contracts shall contain anti-discrimination clauses; and that a committee to enforce the order be created, will effectively deal with this evil.

Another very important question which should be stressed at this time is the training of women for defense production. Too little progress has been made along these lines. I firmly believe that industrial training of women is a vital part of our preparedness program.

Last fall the Women's Bureau called a special conference to consider women's needs and possibilities for a definite share in the defense training. It was revealed in talks by officials connected with training projects—both vocational, pre-employment and within industry training—that almost no women were deriving such benefits at that time. It was further revealed that many more skilled job opportunities would open up to women if they could be instructed not only in manual skills but in related skills such as reading of blue prints and various measuring devices used in industry, and could acquire a knowledge of metals and shop mathematics.

One result of our conference was a letter written in February, 1941, by Dr. John Studebaker, the U. S. Commissioner of Education, who is charged with the administration of the 75 million dollars granted last summer by Congress for defense training as part of the vocational educational system. In this letter which Dr. Studebaker sent to all state executive officers connected with this program he urged that women be trained.

Now in a few communities, notably in Massachusetts, and Connecticut, there has been noticed much more extensive training of women. Also, in a number of places young girls in NYA projects are being instructed along the lines that lead them directly into defense employment. In the much greater effort to train more women in more localities I believe that progressive and informed organizations have a definite responsibility. They should see to it that at least one well qualified woman understanding women's training needs and capabilities be a member of the training committee set up in the various communities to plan courses and select trainees in accordance with the program of the Labor Division of the Office of Production Management.

No mention of the increased use of women workers in industry is complete without also discussing labor standards. With peak production, high speed, record breaking performances, being the first words on everybody's tongue, the necessity for providing for workers' health and safety is sometimes forgotten. New substances and new processes may be introduced into plants without preliminary study as to their possible harmful effects on workers. Enlarged plants may fail to provide the necessary service arrangements for women. Lack of adequate toilet, washing, and lunch facilities, rest rooms, of medical or first-aid equipment, may characterize some expanded plants.

Such disregard of the well being of the wage-earning population must not be condoned on the ground that the emergency justifies any action. Rather an aroused public must point out that such conditions undermine health

and efficiency and will prove unbelievably costly to everyone concerned.

Undoubtedly an effort will soon be made to scrap some of the labor legislation now in existence. During the last World War this took place. The effort succeeded too, and the Governors of certain industrial states were empowered to relax labor laws whenever they thought it advisable.

This must not happen again. We know the folly of relaxing proper regulation. Industrial history during the last World War and since proves that it is a short-sighted policy to lengthen hours of work. Moreover present day standards are conducive to increased production and better quality goods. Recently Great Britain, after experimenting with lengthened hours of work, returned to regulations formerly in effect for women and minors.

Make no mistake. I don't believe in "business as usual," but I do believe in closely scrutinizing and jealously guarding our social and economic gains "as usual." At the same time we throw all the material resources that we possess into the attempt to stem the tide of aggression we must make certain that we continue to fashion on this continent a life which offers the utmost in security, in opportunity, in freedom. Only in this way will the average citizen, wherever he may be—underground, at the factory, bench, in the fields, behind the

store counter—be sure that the American way of living is worth the "all out" effort.

Miss Hawes introduced the next speaker on the panel, Mr. J. C. Evans, technical adviser in the Office of Production Management.

Mr. Evans stated humorously that what the conference probably wanted him to do was tell them how OPM could help their daughters secure employment. He said of course that this he could not do. He would talk, however, about terminology. He gave the information that during the World War, women substituted for men in handling such work as blast furnaces, steel work, shells, machine guns, torpedoes, engines, tools, railway, sheet metal, instruments, chemicals and explosives and similar industries. He stated also that women do well in instances where care and alertness, but little physical exertion is needed, in manipulative skill and speed, and on large machines where lifts are used. He felt that girls using draft machines should be allowed in the schools, pointing out that women on the CAA program are very good, and are the best fliers on the program. He cited an example showing that Negroes see better at night, and it was thought for this reason, would make the best aviators.

Our real difficulty, concluded Mr. Evans, is that we have not enough people trained, and if this is not remedied, we are likely to be embarrassed after opportunities are offered because of lack of trainees.

2. WORK OPPORTUNITIES FOR NEGRO WOMEN IN THE NATIONAL DEFENSE PROGRAM

MRS. JEAN BROWN presiding.

Before we leave the question of employment, what can we do specifically as groups and as individuals? What is the problem? We know that very well, but what we are going to do about it has not been decided. Many women are going to be taken on very soon. They are finding better jobs than women have had before. Our next speaker is Miss Elsie Austin, National President, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, whose organization is making a survey of what jobs are open to women.

MISS AUSTIN: Friends, I think I had better start out by telling you that Delta got very weary of that feeling that is best expressed in "Alice in Wonderland," when Alice was told that there was jam for yesterday, and jam for tomorrow, but no jam for today. We want to know what jam is open to Negro women today in outside fields. In starting out, we have tried to make our survey according to regions. We set about the survey in different ways in different communities, but we have tried to get direct contact with women in fields that are being opened to Negro women, and with employers and agencies who will be involved in defense contracts. And

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PHYSICIAN AND NURSE ON INFANT WARD IN HOSPITAL

while the project is not very well completed, we cannot bring you a long list of facts, but I can bring you a picture. We have found that new types of jobs are opening in defense in three classes: (1) unskilled work in airplane, munition and arsenal plants, where women will be taken on as workers and will not be confined to jobs of cleaning, cooking, etc., but will do certain piece and machine work; (2) clerical jobs. In the latter instance, there must be more stimulation of Negro clerical workers.

In going into the industrial picture in defense industries, we have found that in airplane factories Negro women have been employed. In the Aberdeen set-up in Baltimore, we asked how women got jobs, and many had just written in, had had interviews, and about 12 or 15 Negro women were taken on. They required a very good education, without a doubt. The average education of the Negro women applicants was better than that of the average white group. A knowledge of power machines will also be required. When they got their jobs, power machine tests were not considered a bar, but it is considered so now. It is very important that Negro women have an opportunity to learn power machine work, because many are denied it. Another angle that should be discussed is that there should be some sort of development or training in attitudes of adjustment for Negro women going into new factories, and into set-ups where no previous Negroes have been hired. A lot depends upon the individual foreman, but many Negro women have run into discriminations of one sort or another.

We think that it is important to look farther than immediate settlement to action that causes personal friction. In factories where no Negroes have been employed before, some effort has been made by reactionary forces to prove that Negroes are not efficient and that it is not expedient to hire Negroes and whites together. In our talks with these women, we have stressed the fact that they should not let any circumstances arise to such proportions that Negro and white women may not work together harmoniously. Many times they may have to swallow their pride as a means to an end.

In the clerical field, with pressure on government agencies and various Negro leaders, more positions involving Civil Service status are being opened up to Negro girls. In Washington, you have the best place of getting informed, but for state girls, there is frequently a difficulty of getting notice of examinations. We may write in to the Civil Service Commission or post office, but state girls don't always get the information. We interviewed some girls and found that they made a practice of going to public buildings, postoffices, etc., and watched notices of Civil Service examination. In the East, around the New York area, there is a magazine which contains all Civil Service jobs that will be opened, and here in Washington, there is a like publication. Elsewhere there are not any. Once they got their applications, they

ignored the question of races, for applying for the job, they had to come in with something more than color; they knew subject matter and system. In some borderline southern states, girls have been forming speed groups to keep their speed up in case of opportunities and examinations that might come up.

In another angle, it is impossible for the Federal government to absorb all clerically, ambitious girls. We wonder if the defense industries will take Negroes on in clerical jobs. Private industries have not taken in Negro clerical workers at all. Whether or not effort should be made on private defense industries to try to get in Negro clerical women, is a problem. In southern states, we need a step-up in training for stenography and typing. The girls type well, but are not always good in shorthand. More attention should be given to see that girls from these states are very well trained.

There is too the angle of finding out whether federal departments not located in Washington are employing Negro girls. Some federal agency departments in states where Negroes could be absorbed, have made an honest effort in this connection.

The next step is to find opportunities for promotion. Granted that we get girls into defense industries and clerical jobs, what are the opportunities for their promotion? In very many instances, once they are admitted as unskilled workers, they tend to stay there—they never graduate into the upper ranks regardless of their efficiency. The same thing is true of clerical positions. Some of the grievances that we have received recently have been taken up, but if we keep driving and don't get too discouraged; if we keep working, and all the while confronting them with the fact that here is a golden opportunity and that we are efficient then we are bound to get somewhere. But we must be organized in this effort before we can expect to get what is needed.

MRS. BROWN: The government should be needing every clerical worker that we can get. There is a shortage of clerical people. Our next speaker is from the Civil Service Commission and I would like to have him give some information concerning how women get those jobs through the Civil Service Commission.

MR. COLLINS: The one procedure that is used for filing applications is to use the nearest field office. In some defense industries, they are permitted "spot hiring." They can employ them where and when they find them, and then investigate their record later. For anyone interested in getting a defense job anywhere, the first thing to do is go to a nearby post office and find out where the nearest field office is, and from that field office, information will be given as to where one can apply. If it is not obtained from a field office, one should write directly to the office in Washington.

With regards to the cards that individuals send in asking to be notified of examinations, they sometimes think it is prejudice. But the average person fails

to realize that the Commission gets 1,200 cards per day and that every year there is a housecleaning and sometimes individuals may forget that it has been more than three years since notice was sent in, and that it is necessary to renew it. The speaker before me said something that re-emphasizes this point. In the matter of the merry-go-round, there is a vicious circle in operation against us. Formerly, intelligence was blamed. That has been proven untrue. So many people struggling to get places have been discouraged and have lost the skills they once had. Keep up courage until someone issues a proclamation that jobs must be thrown open. Prepare yourself. Otherwise, the President's proclamation will mean nothing. Unless workers are trained, even though no jobs are immediately available, they will not be given jobs. Get training now, so that when the opportunity comes, you will be qualified. Before getting any specific training, the best thing to do is to get fundamentals. In defense industries and other industries, mathematics,

chemistry and physics are the best things to know, and these are considered fundamentals.

Don't say give these jobs to us because we are Negroes, but because we have trained people ready for these jobs.

Women in industry are given rather monotonous jobs, such as card punching, turning wheels, etc. Unless women or men can see the advantage of getting some outside interest to forestall this ennui, there will come a time when we will have a flood of nervous breakdowns. Women in general are given these jobs. Whenever we have a group of new workers around machines, a large number of accidents occur. While waiting for opportunity, get a good course in first aid. Emergencies always arise in industries and when an employer knows one can step into the situation and take charge, that employee is considered when a promotion is to be made or when some one is to be fired. These are important sidelights that you can take back to women and men in your communities.

3. NEGRO WOMEN AND ORGANIZED LABOR

MRS. LOUISE JOHNSON McDONALD: Women in labor unions are managing the question of the type of jobs they have held. Only in municipal jobs are they able to find out more about labor unions. All are gaining from this situation, and we are going to do something about it. Women are reluctant about joining labor unions. Today, workers of America are far better off because of assurances through labor unions and certain legislations. The question of social security has held just as the minimum wage hour laws have held in certain states. Unfortunately, none of these laws apply to farm or domestic work, where the bulk of Negro labor is amassed.

There are 10,000 Negro women in the launderer's group in New York working in large buildings, where the government insures good working conditions, with a minimum wage of \$14.00 per week.

On the WPA, in most all of the projects, Negro women are working as teachers, teaching women to read and write, also new techniques, and other programs that are valuable. I think you will agree that household projects which teach domestic work to girls are very, very important. The Garment Workers Union was organized in New York against sweatshop conditions. In connection with the union, certain recreation has been planned by the union. The play "Needles and Pins" was a recreational project of the union. Negroes should become union-minded because of the way unions are moulding public opinion.

MISS MILLER: In Illinois, the state from which I come, we are taught not to believe in discrimination. Under the Constitution, it is our right to have equality. I believe

that God helps those who help themselves, and therefore believe that this is our opportunity to help ourselves. We cannot wait until the defense program is over to settle the problem. The union does not wait and will come out right now and tackle the problems. When we elected our first president, one of the four representatives was a Negro woman.

Our biggest problem is the kind of job to be given and vigilance to see that Negro women be given jobs. There are still constitutions of labor unions that limit their membership to white males only. This does not fit in with democracy, of course, but we still have these traces. There is, however, less of this today than ever before. Unions going into industries have had to change their policies. Even in those industries where women are now perfectly capable of working, there is a low ratio of women belonging to the union. The biggest defense industry is the federal government. It employs over a million people. It is important what the government does about Negro women, for it sets the example. There is nothing we should pay more attention to than what happens in the government. One out of 10 Negroes in Washington are in the government as elevator girls, charwomen, etc. One of the best stenographers I know is a Negro girl. She does work for the union, but has not been able to be placed as a stenographer in the government departments. She has taken examinations for the position of stenographer and has made good grades, but many times the list has been declared null because of the Civil Service Commission. There are ways of finding jobs for the unemployed now who are trained. Many schools graduate people every year. White youths go directly into

industries—why not Negroes? Why should there be so much special training for Negroes? In the government buildings, there are not many Negroes. If there are any, they are working without lights, in basements, in corridors, except in the cases of about five different jobs.

The biggest defense industry is the federal government. The biggest pay received by Negroes working in defense industries is from the federal government. When you go to see the various personnel officers about jobs for Negroes, they always raise objections. They never run out of objections. Pressure is the only answer. Cases of Negroes can be won only by fair play and justice and that is all Negroes are asking for. They just want jobs that will entitle them to feel decent and earn decent wages, which is the right of every American. Labor unions are doing their best to find jobs for Negroes. Fight until there are no jim-crow tendencies in labor unions.

There is one special problem in unions and that is the reluctance of women to join unions. They think that it is not fitting for women. It is true that all of us must be very encouraging in order to persuade women to join the unions. We can do it though because we have many fine leaders, but not as many as Negro men.

Another problem is presented in the women who stay at home holding the purse strings, and who do not want their husbands to join unions. If women in the homes would encourage men to join unions, they would be helping the work of the unions a lot to improve on conditions in industry.

Other problems to be fought by the union include the fight against police brutality and denial of the right to vote in certain states. Here in Washington, whites were told not to vote for suffrage because Negroes would take over the nation's capital!

It is necessary for Negroes to feel particular kinship with labor unions that do not discriminate against Negroes. In this country with 13,000,000 Negroes, with union workers who do not discriminate we can accomplish many things. Study ways of working together and keep fighting.

MISS MYERS: This seems to put the Negro in the position of Biggers in "Native Son" by Richard Wright. A great deal of attention is given to the consideration of getting Negro jobs in National Defense. It all points to the possibility that if one Negro girl will get training for one job, and is appointed, we can be proud. There are isolated cases here and there. But the Negro's problem is not solved in this way. How can National Defense help those in household service? There are almost 500,000 sharecroppers and tenant farmers. How can National Defense help them? We may get in 1,000 conferences of good-will, but good-will does not mean everything. Idealism does not mean the best of action. We want concrete action. The struggle belongs to the man himself, the Negro sharecropper, the person in

household service, the factory worker who cleans, etc. Trade unions find the impetus with the worker for his own emancipation. The Negro woman does not want the relief which gives bread but destroys her dignity. She wants decent wages and then she can buy her own bread. The trade union reaches her where she is. The Negro woman is careful of things given to her. She is taught to struggle and fight for things she is entitled to.

In the last ten years, we point with great honor to the contract of Sleeping Car Porters. This was the achievement of Henry "Hank" Johnson. We also point with pride to the five Negroes who died in strikes in South Chicago.

The trade unions teach the Negro to vote and participate in the federal government. They need to know more about the federal government, and need to know special information. This information caused many telegraph messages, letters, and telephone calls, to be sent to Congressmen during the Chicago fight.

Why is this such a slow development? The reasons are: 1. trade unionism was retarded because it concerned those with skilled jobs, and our workers are in unskilled work; 2. when exclusion policies were written into trade union constitutions, Negroes did not do anything about it. We tried to escape and go only into professions. All hand labor was considered menial, and all children wanted to be professional; 3. anti-union propaganda was carried on by white and Negro men—(citation of race riots in 1919, etc.). How many Negroes have found out just what were the real causes of these race riots? These riots were the results of strikes and were managed by capitalists; 4. some states want Negroes who came in migratory years to the North and Northwest to go back to the South. Their children are asked to go back to take care of the old people. This is a type of propaganda; 5. intimidations—Negroes are afraid to attend meetings if they are threatened with lynchings; 6. use of Negro professionals as anti-unionists. Many professional Negroes are persuaded to tell management every move the union makes; 7. interracial committees in the South. These committees act as information committees, and it is found that the majority of such committees have employers or their wives filling the leading offices; 8. refusal to admit Negroes to the unions; 9. separate Negro local unions. There are not enough trained Negroes to run local unions adequately and efficiently; 10. certain state laws prohibit white and Negroes meeting together.

We must teach Negroes about labor union acts. We can carry on education against strike-breaking, to respect picket lines, to help organize labor supply among Negroes. Negro business may violate wage-hour laws often and Negroes don't like to tell it. Encourage Negroes to report every instance where unfair labor conditions exist. We can discourage official agencies becoming strike-breaking agencies. We can teach children to dislike dole and charity. We can give strong support to trade unions. We can encourage this movement all over

America. We can teach the meaning of solidarity. Together Negroes and whites can go out to solve the problem which is so acute for Negroes and too acute for them to deal with by themselves.

MISS MARTINEZ: Of all the discussions here today, the last speaker was the only one who based conclusions on absolute struggle. In spite of the fact that misleading propaganda was put out, Negroes were brought into trade unions through struggle. We do not find it difficult to organize Negro women, but because of unfair practices, Negro women are not given the right to help form policies of the unions. Trade unions have a lot to do with breaking down discrimination.

Domestic workers are not united. Why? What has the trade union done about it. What about agricultural workers? Since most of the people come from poll-tax states and are not encouraged to join unions, it is very significant that this conference is held here today. I believe that nothing but absolute struggle will win out in the end. Trade unions must take more interest in Negro women. Do away with discrimination in unions. Take up complete struggle against poll-tax and all inclusion in the social security act.

If Negroes form one-tenth of a population, the same country that has this population uses them to defend that country, and should ask industry to give them jobs. Have a definite program. We want jobs in ratio to our population. Recognize the strength of organized labor,

as well as the debt labor owes to Negro women, and wipe out discrimination.

QUESTION: Mr. Collins, I notice that in taking examinations in Civil Service examinations, certain lists are set up. If people can go to different departments and shop for Civil Service jobs, what good are registers?

MR. COLLINS: I am not a policy-making member. I make examinations and post orders. The register is established and when an appointing official sends a request for a register for one appointment, he is sent three names. The Commission at present has no way of enforcing an appointing official to appoint that first person first, or the second person second, etc. In fact, the first and second persons may never get appointments, because of the one out of three variation. Perhaps that is something to work on. A person can be certified four times and then his name is taken off the register, unless a request is made to keep his name on the register. Many people wander into the office and take an exam and then do nothing until a job is offered. The appointing officer makes requests that a name be included on a list. Because of the defense programs, almost every rule has been changed radically. In some places, if 1,000 names are examined, they can take 1,000 people and there is no telling what happens. There is no reason for any department asking about race, because there are definite regulations forbidding it.



A LAWYER AT THE BAR PLEADING FOR HER CLIENT IN A DISTRICT COURT

4. CIVIL LIBERTIES

MISS ANNABEL SAWYER—*Presiding*: We feel that this panel subject is of great importance. With that in mind we have allotted the entire morning for its discussion. The founders of our government felt that civil liberties was of prime importance because as early as 1791, the first ten amendments to the constitution were added. Those ten amendments are known as the Bill of Rights and were formed for the purpose of assuring civil liberties to individual citizens. Various states, of which I am very sorry there is an inadequate number, have added to their own constitutions, in the form of civil codes and bills of right in spite of the fact of what would appear as adequate insurance against discrimination. We have all of these things which we know about. My own state, Kansas, was one of the first to adopt a civil rights code. In 1941, a bill was introduced by a person who I am glad to say was a Negro college graduate. It was passed by the legislature, signed by the Governor and is now a law prohibiting anyone from serving in collective bargaining if they have discriminated. So there is protection in civil rights.

The first speaker on our panel, Mrs. Ruth Whitehead Whaley of the National Women Lawyers Association, has a fine past. She was graduated from Williams College, magna cum laude, at the age of 17 years. When

she graduated, her father took her diploma, showed it to her, then told her to give it to her mother and forget about it. She later graduated from Fordham University, and is now a practicing lawyer in New York City. Her most famous case was that of her husband when he was dismissed from the labor department. This case was before the courts for ten years and she finally won out. I don't know how she had the endurance, but she did. She will speak of Negroes and civil rights.

MRS. WHALEY: Civil liberty is, to my mind, the all inclusive subject of the conference. Some of us are very well informed on other topics and are very much interested, but we don't do anything unless we touch upon civil liberties. Unions touch at certain points on civil liberties, but not everywhere. There is no Negro who is conscious he is alive that does not at times have the lack of civil liberties touch him, and gnaw at the very vitals of his existence. It touches us in all professions. It limits us as to where we shall spend our money, how we shall spend it, when we shall spend it, etc. We suffer more from a denial of civil liberties than any other group in the United States.

Civil liberties of persons in the United States, citizens and non-citizens, are defined in several documents. The Declaration of Independence says that the truth is self-evident that all men are created equal, etc. From there down through the Bill of Rights giving us freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, religion, security of person and property, trial by jury, right to petition, etc., are definitions of civil liberties. After that we have the 13th, 14th and 15th amendments and the Emancipation Proclamation. While it is true that these were inserted in the Constitution for the benefit of Negroes, corporations have gained more benefit from them than Negroes. The 19th amendment took away the last vestige of the belief that we were human chattel, when women were given the right to vote. If you read all this and have never lived in the United States, you say "There is democracy; there is equality; there is justice." Of course, Negroes who live in the United States know differently and are apt to have a bitterness toward it or a dejected, hopeless attitude. Of course, we must consider that the 13th, 14th and 15th amendments were not written with Negroes in mind in any phase. This has had its mark on people, Negroes and former slave owners alike. No stroke of the pen, no act of legislation can completely change a person's mind. We should bear that in mind. When we consider the matter of civil liberties, our freedom of speech has certain limitations.

You just can't go out and say anything you want to because of the liability of punishment that may result



ANOTHER BENNETT COLLEGE STUDENT PREPARES TO CREATE THE AMERICAN HOME—IN THE "SECOND LINE OF DEFENSE"

from assault or libel suits. You must have a permit for most mass meetings. This touches on the right to have freedom of assembly. The same is true when we get a permit for a parade.

The main violation that Negroes suffer from is security of life, person and property, together with an absence of any commonly accepted belief that the Creator endowed him with any equal rights. Not enough people think about civil liberties for Negroes at all, that is the crux of the matter. It is an attitude from which we suffer. There are sufficient laws to make United States a real democracy, where all might have civil liberties, but the will and morale of 4/5 of the United States do not try to see that these laws are carried out. I submit to you for your consideration not only this morning, but the mornings and nights before you, as leaders of Negroes, that the task that confronts us, if America is to mean anything to us, to our children, or our children's children, is to find a way to change or stir the attitudes of 4/5 of America. We have sufficient laws, but not the will of the people. We don't appeal them, but we ignore them and only have them on paper. We have much on paper, but nothing in actuality. Negroes are very bitter over the lack of inclusion in national defense. On June 18th, in "My Day," Eleanor Roosevelt spoke of this lack, and said, "This living in a democracy is a problem, isn't it?" I don't know, because I have never lived in one. I'd like to know what it means for "a man to be a man for a' that"!

Dr. Embry of the Rosenwald Fund says the American attitude toward the Negro threatens the whole practice and theory of democracy. I mention that because I feel that of that 4/5 of Americans, our point of approach would be more effective if we talked less about how wrong it is to treat the Negroes like this, and if we said more about how ridiculous it is. The problem of the Negro will eat like a cancer at the vitals of democracy.

Chief Justice Holmes states that freedom of speech comes not only from a right that gives freedom of speech and ideas that you agree upon, but for ideas on things that you detest. So we need to tell democracy that there is not freedom of speech for a chosen few, if it is to be considered less than a mockery. It must be for everyone, including black people.

The greatest enemy of democracy is unemployment. Following it, are racial discrimination, employment unrest in industries, and the threat of war. The Department of Labor has tried to bring about a rapprochement between capital and labor, but their efforts have been almost in vain. When it comes to racial discontent stirred up by the lack of democracy, America does just like an ostrich and sticks its head into the sand. On this matter, you should be thinking of whether America is worthy of democracy. The price of democracy to Ameri-

ca is how far she is willing to go to give civil liberties to Negroes. The federal government is the chief offender. If I am traveling South, my segregation begins in the nation's capital, within sight of the dome, of Lincoln's tomb, only a hand's throw from the government. I become a Negro, not an American. I can go to Boston, New York, and Chicago, and begin to grow toward being an American citizen, but when I come to Washington, I shrink until I become less than a slave. As a slave I expect no rights, but as a citizen I have no place to turn. The federal government cannot have any effect until it cleans house. We do not need extra laws, but only laws that protect every citizen. I do not believe this problem is going to be solved by migration. I do not feel that it can be corrected by Nazism, Fascism or Communism. These do not represent a change of heart. Four-fifths of America must experience a change of heart as well as attitude. No matter what the name is, there must be a change of attitude and a change of responsibility.

I suggest that we use organizations now in existence or that we may create new ones. We need a better recording of the accomplishments of Negroes. We need to scan all proposed legislations. We need a cessation of all laws concerning Negroes alone. We do not need any special legislation. Rather, we need to turn to the enforcement of legislation now in existence. We need the ballot, and a closer inspection of people running on the ballot to see if they understand justice. We need this, no matter what the party affiliation. In order to solve this problem of living in a democracy, we need to examine the approach to this problem by all candidates in order to inform the masses. We must control the major organizations which are going to do this. We must be willing to give our time and money to these organizations. We must control them because in this matter of civil liberties of any people, there comes those hair-line decisions when only a person who has experienced pain can go forward, and when only the mass of Negro people can do it, if it can be done. It is our opportunity and it is up to us if we will taken advantage of it. We must look on civil liberties for Negroes as a whole, not as an individual matter.

In summary,

1. We need no additional laws;
2. We need enforcement of the laws that we now have;
3. The crux of the situation is that only 1/5 of America has an interested attitude toward civil liberties for Negroes, and even so are in a position where they must be stimulated. Our great task is to stir the attitudes of the remaining 4/5 of America.

Conference Impressions

By AUDLEY MOORE

THE National Conference of Negro Women held in Washington, D. C., June 28 to 30, 1941, represents a great step forward in the march of our people toward freedom. It revealed the tremendous latent power in Negro womanhood.

Negro women have a great role to play in the future of the Negro people. In the struggle for emancipation of the Negro from chattel slavery, there stand out the figures of Harriet Tubman and Sojourner Truth. These two noble women whose great love for their people led them to much self-sacrifice only represent the thousands of Negro women whose unsung endeavors helped to break the shackles of chattel slavery. We can and must follow in their footsteps.

The convention met at a time when the Negro people were gathering their forces to march on Washington for jobs and equality, at a time when they had achieved from President Roosevelt an executive order against discrimination. This order, despite its shortcomings, must be regarded as a victory the fruits of which can be gathered only through continued struggle and the unity of white and colored people in defense factories.

The convention met at a period critical for our country and our people. We met at a time when Sumner Welles, speaking for the State Department, had indicated that our government's policy was to defeat Hitler and Hitlerism.

Never has it been so clear that the Negro people are endangered by Hitlerism at home and abroad. To Negro Americans, Hitlerism means the lynch mob, the denial of jobs, and the right to vote and serve on juries. American Hitlerism means the whole systematic cur-

tailment of their rights and liberties as guaranteed to them in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendments to the Constitution.

The convention went on record to support several important measures for the purpose of guaranteeing the exercise of these elementary democratic rights to the Negro people. The women supported the Geyer Anti-Poll Tax Bill, the Anti-Lynching Bill, the Marcantonio Bill against the discrimination of Negroes in the defense industries.

They called for the reinstatement of Dr. Max Yergan, as instructor of Negro history at City College, New York. They demanded the rescinding of WPA and relief cuts, and supported the domestic workers in their struggle for wage and hour legislation.

They pledged support to progressive labor and asked for Labor's support of the Negro worker. They urged that Negro people support the USO, and called for equal opportunities for Negro youth in training and in jobs for National Defense.

The struggles for the redress of the just grievances of Colored Americans will put flesh and blood into President Roosevelt's pledge to give all aid to Great Britain, to the Soviet Union, and all peoples battling against Hitler and Hitlerism. All America can be proud of these Negro women, school teachers, artists, domestic workers, trade unionists, scientists, doctors, social workers, housewives and attorneys, who journeyed to this conference from the four corners of the land. Negro women must carry aloft the banner of Harriet Tubman and Sojourner Truth.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

In keeping with Council luncheon themes for the year established at the Annual Dinner last October when ex-Minister Florence Harriman spoke on the plight of occupied Europe, a group of New York Council members presented "The World Today" at an International luncheon given recently in the Banquet Room of the 137th Branch Y.W.C.A. With your executive secretary acting as Chairman of the Committee, and Vivian Carter Mason, presiding officer, the occasion brought together representatives from Free France, England, India, China, Czechoslovakia, Cuba, Haiti, Ethiopia and West Africa. Dr. Anna Schneiderman officially represented the Jewish Congress, Mrs. Leathe Hemachrandra, American womanhood, and Princess Wizeero Abadee, the Royal House and family of Haile Selassie. The personnel of those attending was selected from the membership of our affiliated organizations.

The Council made a further contribution to the tea given by Dr. Mabel Carney of Columbia University, in honor of Negro Summer School Students of Teacher's College, July, 1941. The executive secretary had been asked to assist with the invitation list in order that summer school students from all parts of the country might meet council women and other interesting personalities of New York City. Mrs. Ida M. Ross of Kentucky, sister of the executive secretary, was presented and personally thanked by Dr. Carney for the part she had played in helping to bring these two groups together. The tea was held in Dodge Hall of Teacher's College with more than 200 persons present.

A report of Metropolitan Council activities will appear in the JOURNAL issue following the annual meeting.

Sincerely,

FLORENCE K. NORMAN.

Negro Woman in Organization—Labor

By SABINA MARTINEZ

Organizer for Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America

TODAY when organized labor is forced to play an important role in safeguarding not only the economic but also the political life of the American worker, the Negro woman naturally focuses her attention upon her role as a participant in this great movement. What will organized labor deal her and what will be her role as a part of this basic pillar of society? Organized labor has rescued the Negro woman from her obscure position in basic industry, where she once toiled and labored from ten to twelve hours a day under most inhuman conditions and at a starvation wage. Some women have come timidly, others very sure of their convictions, and some with mental reservations. But all have secured better wages, in many cases as much as 60 per cent increase. All their hours have been reduced to eight hours a day, and all their positions have been rendered more secure. The "bosses", who formerly subjected them to their whims and fancies, through their participation in unions, have learned to respect them.

In bringing this about organized labor found it no easy task; not because women did not appreciate unions, but (1) because of the false anti-union propaganda that had been handed out to our women by the "bosses" and enemies of Negro people, and organized labor, and (2) because of the definitely Jim-Crow policy of the high executives of the A. F. of L., which ignored Negro people in such basic industries as Laundry, Textiles, Cleaners and Dyers, Domestic, and Agriculture. This policy, along with corrupt Negro leadership, has made it difficult for progressive labor such as the C. I. O. and some of the A. F. of L. unions to win the confidence of the Negro people, especially that of the Negro women. However, this mass movement seeking to improve social and economic conditions can no longer be ignored.

Negro women workers welcomed the birth of the C. I. O. and the partially open door of the A. F. of L. and are now a part of such unions as: Laundry, Cleaners and Dyers, Textiles, Teachers, Domestic and others. Negro women helped to lay the basis for these unions and in many instances were on the first committees that helped to formulate the policies of these unions. Today, they are holding offices as organizers, business agents and directors of educational departments.

The Laundry workers were unorganized for thirty years in the city of New York. In six months the C. I. O. has organized this industry into a compact body of some 27,000 Laundry workers, the great majority of whom are Negro women. Negro women helped lay the foundation, formulate the policies and now hold executive offices in this union, which is an affiliate of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America. Some of those who serve on the executive staff of this group are Charlotte Almond, Phoebe Symond, Roberta Randolph, and Sabina Martinez.

The Cleaners and Dyers Union which is only four years old was given its first impetus toward C. I. O. by Ida J. Dudley, a Negro woman. Seeing the need for organization in this field, she started to round up the clerks, being able to

organize a vast number of them. The Textile and Domestic workers, who are only partially organized, have brought into the ranks of organized labor hoards of miserable, exploited workers who are denied protection under Social Security or State Labor laws.

Dora Jones, backed by many progressive labor groups, is preparing an extensive drive for the organization of Domestic workers. She especially needs the cooperation of all Negro organizations, for in 1930, 3 out of every 5 Negro women employed, were in the field of Domestic or Personal Service. Many Negro women have started upon their careers in business as Domestic workers, and should be willing to help gain some protection for those who, because of circumstances, are forced to remain in this field.

The Sharecroppers Union, the Tenant League, and many of the newly organized unions owe their existence to the unselfish contributions of Negro women. Therefore labor must not only welcome the contributions that women have to make, but recognize its obligation to these pioneers. The principles upon which the C. I. O. was founded brought hope and courage to every Negro woman, not only because of its stand for "equal pay for equal work" regardless of race, creed or color, but because it offers equality of leadership regardless of sex, thereby allowing opportunity for the Negro woman to express herself unhampered by the usual male dominance. Organized labor owes women as a class more than a union book. It must rid itself of the old idea that women must be subordinate to men, or that women do not provide as good leadership as men. Organized labor must make a sincere effort to increase the woman personnel of its membership. In this connection the Negro woman today has the chance of the century to choose her field of occupation which is ever broadening, thanks to the struggle of organized labor in opening doors to her, and breaking down discrimination in industry. Once a woman has entered her field of industry, she must join that union. She must become a part of the union just as she is a part of her shop. She must attend meetings, participate in discussions and be ever eager to improve the position of herself and her fellow workers. She must consider herself a worker, and be conscious of all political and economic struggles that affect the working group to which she belongs. She must never pass a picket line or buy anything that labor has requested boycotted. She must seriously question herself on the wise use of her vote, whether it is a union election which guides the life of the union; the local election, which guides the life of the locality; or the national election, which guides the life of the entire nation. Most of all she must have complete confidence in herself and her fundamental belief in the principles of organized labor, or she will never be able to convince any fellow worker. She must deal patiently, and be slow to judge, knowing that there are many victims of oppression outside of her own immediate racial group whom she must learn always to consider. She must continue to contribute to the cause of organized labor as a laborer and as a leader.

*The Negro Woman Worker

By JEAN COLLIER BROWN

The Women's Bureau, Washington, D. C.

ONE in every six women workers in America is a Negro, according to the latest census figures—those of 1930. In all, nearly 2,000,000 Negro women were classed as gainful workers at that time. How many of these women now have jobs and how many are unemployed; where the employed women are working; how much they earn, and how their wages compare with those of white women workers: these are questions that have a direct bearing on the economic problems of today.

Though women in general have been discriminated against and exploited through limitation of their opportunities for employment, through long hours, low wages, and harmful working conditions, such hardships have fallen upon Negro women with double harshness. As the members of a new and inexperienced group arrive at the doors of industry, the jobs that open up to them ordinarily are those vacated by other workers who move on to more highly paid occupations. Negro women have formed such a new and inexperienced group in wage employment. To their lot, therefore, have fallen the more menial jobs, the lower paid, the more hazardous—in general, the least agreeable and desirable. And one of the tragedies of the depression was the realization that the unsteady foothold Negro women had attained in even these jobs was lost when great numbers of unemployed workers from other fields clamored for employment.

Not very much is actually known about the economic position of Negro women today. The depression caused serious employment displacements that cannot be measured accurately. However, certain work problems of Negro women are outstanding and may be discussed with some measure of authority. To that end it may be well to discuss what is known concerning the general occupational position of Negro women; and further, something of each major occupational group as to numbers of workers, employment opportunities, hours, wages, and working conditions, and any other factors that may be of special importance.

OCCUPATIONAL STATUS

On the whole, most women, white or Negro, work for their living just as do men, not because they want to but because they must. The reason larger proportions of Negro than of white women work, lies largely in the low scale of earnings of Negro men. In their pre-Civil War status it was the ability of Negro women to work that governed their market value. At the close of the Civil

War a large proportion of all Negro women—married as well as single—were forced to engage in breadwinning activities. In 1930, at the time of the latest census, it was found still true that a larger proportion of Negro women than of white women were gainfully occupied. Practically 2 in 5 Negro women, in contrast to 1 in 5 white women, work for their living.

In pre-Civil War days the employment of the Negro woman was almost completely restricted to two fields where work is largely unskilled and heavy—agriculture and domestic service. Agriculture utilized the large majority of workers. In 1930 about 9 in every 10 Negro women still were engaged in farm work or in domestic and personal service, with more than two-thirds of them in domestic and personal service. The major occupational shift for Negro women has been, therefore, within these two large fields of employment. What occupational progress Negro women have made has been for the most part in connection with their entrance into the better paid, better standardized occupations in domestic and personal service. In addition, increases have been shown in the last 20 years in the professions and in clerical work. From 1910 to 1930 there was an increase of 33,000 Negro women in manufacturing, though a small decrease took place between 1920 and 1930.

OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF NEGRO WOMEN, 1890-1930

	1930	1890
Domestic and personal	1,152,560	505,985
Agriculture	495,284	427,648
Manufacturing and mechanical	101,070	26,811
Professional	63,027	8,805
Transportation and communication; trade	16,776	1,769
Clerical	10,862	577

DOMESTIC AND PERSONAL SERVICE (See Section on Household Employment)

Laundresses and laundry operatives.

The census makes a distinction between women laundresses who are self employed, working in their own or their employers' homes, and operatives employed in commercial laundries. In 1930 there still were about 270,000 Negro women laundresses not in laundries, despite the rapid rise of power laundries in the decade from 1920 to 1930. There were nearly 50,000 Negro women laundry operatives.

Though employment conditions generally are better standardized and more favorable for women in commercial laundries than in private homes, the direct influence

*Printed with permission of the Woman's Bureau, Department of Labor, for whom this study was made and first printed in pamphlet form.

of home laundry work on the hour and wage standards set by the commercial laundry can be seen clearly. In a study of laundries by the Women's Bureau in 1935, Bureau agents were told again and again that commercial laundries, especially in the South, were having a terrific struggle to compete with Negro washwomen. The following comments made by laundry employers, employment office officials, and other informed persons illustrate the conditions at that time:

Since the depression, servants are required to do laundry as well as maid work; most of them get only \$3 a week on the average.

Greatest competition is colored washwomen. Will take a 30-pound bundle for a dollar. Some of them do a week's washing for 50 cents.

The washwoman charges only 60 to 75 per cent of what the laundry charges for the same size bundle.

The manager knew of a number of washwomen who were glad to get a day's work for carfare, lunch, and an old dress.

Data of much interest concerning employment conditions of Negro women in laundries are found in the Women's Bureau laundry study. Conducted during the N. R. A. period, the study shows a relation between code rates and actual conditions, and indicates what amounted to a race differential in the minimum wages set, as follows: Minimum-wage rates set by the N.R.A. laundry code for a 40-hour week ranged from 14 cents to 30 cents an hour, depending on geographical section and size of city within the section. In the nine southern States, for whose entire area the weekly minimum was set at \$5.60, three-fourths of the women laundry workers were Negroes, according to the 1930 census. On the other hand, in 10 States for which the highest minimum was set, 4 in the far West and the others in New England, less than 4 percent of the women laundry workers were Negroes.

Wage data in the study showed average weekly earnings considerably higher in the North than in the South. The average for all men employees—productive labor, office employees, routemen, and other labor—ranged from \$27.63 a week in Boston to \$16.44 in Savannah. For all women employees the range was from \$13.38 in Boston to \$5.79 in Charleston.

For white and Negro women on productive work, weekly earnings were just about comparable in Atlantic City—\$7.99 for the white and \$7.64 for the Negro women. Negro women in Chicago had the highest average weekly earnings of any such city group covered by the study, \$9.83, but the earnings of the white woman averaged \$11.14.

Wages of women workers in the South were distressingly low for both white and Negro workers on productive work. The widest differences in average weekly wages were in Memphis, where white women received \$9.21 for an average week's work while Negro women found but \$5.57 in an average pay envelope. In Jacksonville the earnings were \$8.43 for white women and \$5.01 for Negro women; in Charlotte they were \$8.47



GARMENT AND CLOTHING WORKERS

for white and \$5.25 for Negro; in Greenville they were respectively \$7.84 and \$5.45; in Savannah, \$7.62 and \$5.32. In no southern city covered by the Women's Bureau in the laundry study did the average earnings of Negro women reach the exceedingly low minimum of \$5.60 set by the N. R. A. laundry code.

Hotels and restaurants.

Many Negro women have found work in one or another of the branches of public housekeeping, as cooks, waitresses, chambermaids, cafeteria counter girls, and so forth. In 1930, the census reported more than 86,000 Negro women in such occupations. Though hours tend to be shorter and better standardized in public than in private housekeeping, the workweek of the women in a hotel or restaurant is likely to be much longer than that of the woman in factory, store, or laundry.

Negro women in hotels and restaurants were included in a Woman's Bureau survey of the wages and hours of Tennessee women in the winter of 1935-36. In the hotel industry of Tennessee more jobs are open to Negro than to white employees, so the data in the study are of special interest.

In the lodging departments of hotels most of the jobs open to women are those of chambermaids, cleaners, and linen-room attendants. The first two were filled by Negro women and the last by white women. Average week's earnings for Negro chambermaids and general cleaners were \$5.65, the most common rate of pay for this work being about \$25 a month. About two-fifths of the employees in the lodging departments were given a noon meal or their meals and lodging. For the few hotels with laundries the average week's earnings of the women laundry workers—chiefly Negroes—were only \$4.60.

In hotel kitchens Negro women generally were found doing vegetable or pantry work, most of the cooks being men. Meals allowed on duty augmented somewhat the low average week's earnings of \$5.50. For the smaller group of white women doing somewhat similar work the week's earnings averaged about \$8. Very few Negro waitresses were found in hotel dining rooms.

While the wage scale for women in the kitchens of



VISITING NURSES START ON THEIR ROUNDS

restaurants not in hotels was somewhat higher than of those in hotels, the average earnings of Negro women in such kitchens were but \$8.55. Over 80 percent of the Negro women, many of whom served as the chief cook of the restaurant, had earnings below \$10.

Beauty shops.

A relatively new occupation for Negro women workers is that of beauty service. That this occupation is developing rapidly for Negro women is common knowledge, but this fact is proved by the census, which shows that while in 1910 there were only about 3,800 Negro women workers in such employment, in 1930 the number was $3\frac{1}{2}$ times as large, or about 13,000.

Some indication of employment conditions for Negro women in beauty shops may be gained from a Women's Bureau study of such establishments in the winter of 1933-34. In the four cities covered by the survey, 390 white shops employing some 1,300 women, and 75 Negro shops employing 150 women, were covered. Most of the Negro women were serving the needs of their own race, but a few were at work in white beauty shops or barber shops.

Though beauty-shop employment is sometimes considered to offer desirable vocational opportunities for Negro girls and women, earnings reported to Women's Bureau agents were low. The average weekly wage was only \$8, or about three-fifths of that of the white women in the industry. Almost two-thirds of the women re-

ceived less than \$10 a week and only about 1 in 16 earned as much as \$15. Hours were very long. Three of every five Negro women reported had a schedule longer than 48 hours. More than two-thirds of these women had worked, or been ready for service, more than 54 hours in the week. Closing hours were later and the spread of hours was longer than in the white shops.

AGRICULTURE

Long as may be the hours of the Negro domestic worker, low as may be her earnings and those of the Negro woman in laundry, hotel, or restaurant, in general the economic status of these workers is much more favorable than that of the Negro woman agricultural laborer. For this woman worker there are few aspects of her working life over which she has any real control. Crop conditions, markets, and prices; the employment status of her family, whether as owners, tenant farmers, sharecroppers, or wage workers; the necessity of accepting field work as one of a family group rather than on an individual basis; lack of educational facilities, particularly in the rural South, which would enable her to equip herself for other employment if it were available—these are some of the factors that materially affect her living.

Numbers employed.

In 1930, agriculture absorbed the services of the second largest group of Negro women—about half a million. Roughly seven in eight of these women—about one-fourth of whom were wage workers and three-fifths unpaid family workers—were in the seven southern States of Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Texas. Cotton is, of course, the major crop in these States, and it is on cotton that Negro labor is so largely employed.

Typical employment conditions.

A marked trend from tenant farmer to the lower status of sharecropper is shown for Negro labor in the South from 1920 to 1935 by United States Department of Agriculture reports—a trend not shared to the same extent by the white agricultural group. Though many stories have appeared recently in periodicals and the press concerning the near-desperate plight of some of these workers, little information is available to define the problem with any exactitude. A brief but vivid description of the Southern sharecropper-system was given by a Negro woman sharecropper at a national economic conference sponsored by the Joint Committee on National Recovery, from which the following is quoted:

And clothing isn't in it. Since they stopped using fertilizer the clothes are very scanty, because we could take fertilizer sacks and make aprons and dresses for the little children. But since they are not using fertilizer very much you just can't hide their nakedness through the winter. Sometimes you find in some of the houses that the little children are barefooted, and the children in some of the houses couldn't go to school in the winter because they did not have clothes to go in. And some of them haven't even got houses to stay in as good as lots of common barns. And some families of 12 or 14 live

in houses with maybe one room and kitchen, with maybe three beds where 10 or 12 are sleeping in three beds, and the kitchen is so open that you can just pass by and look through and see them all sitting in there, and not even have a flue for the stove pipe to go in, and the stove is setting out in the floor. And maybe they have two joints of stovepipe, and maybe one piece of elbow, and when you start a fire you will get smoke all over the house until it gets started burning good, and you have to stay outside until it starts burning good because it smokes you out. Families have to put up with all kinds of things like that.

Though data on Negro agricultural workers are difficult to secure, a survey of agricultural labor conditions in Concordia Parish, La., issued by the United States Department of Agriculture in October 1937, throws some light on the status of these workers in a rich cotton section. Both men and women cotton pickers were interviewed by Government agents. Wages were found to be unbelievably low, year's earnings for agricultural work averaging only \$41.67 for women, \$120.19 for men. The average income for a whole year, including earnings of dependents, relief (both work and direct), and non-agricultural earnings, was only \$62.36 for the women; for men it reached \$177.53. None of the women who did only farm work had more than 150 days of employment, and most of them had less than 90 days in the year.

After stating that more than half of the Negro women interviewed had less than a fifth-grade education, this Department of Agriculture report concludes by outlining in general the economic status of Negro cotton labor:

In summary, the basis of the labor supply on the plantations of Concordia Parish is this uneducated and racially distinct group of people. Both men and women work in the fields. The combination of low wage rates and intermittent employment means meager annual earnings. Many of the workers, though not employed full time, live in shacks on the plantation the year round; others come from nearby villages or come across the river from Natchez, Mississippi. Social contact is primarily within the group itself with little or no outside association. Concordia Parish presents a picture of the evolution of the old plantation with its slave labor emerging as a unit operated with cropper or wage labor. The position of its laboring class has not changed materially from that of earlier times.

The future of southern agriculture and the Negro worker.

Disheartening as are the present circumstances of Negro agricultural workers in the South, the future seems to hold even more serious threats to their economic security. An article in the Monthly Labor Review for July 1937, by N. A. Tolles of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, discusses among other topics the relocation of displaced farm tenants:

The greatest potential source of future migration in the United States is to be found among the tenant farmers of the southeastern Cotton Belt. The thousands of former tenants now to be found seeking casual jobs in Florida may be only the forerunners of much greater numbers of both white and Negro migrants.

Tenancy in the Old South is the successor to the slave system. Both institutions were, in different ways, devices for

holding on the land, on a subsistence basis, sufficient labor to meet the maximum seasonal requirements of agriculture. As a result, the Southeast is now drenched with labor and is therefore especially vulnerable to all forces which may cause the displacement of workers. The depression, followed by the crop-restriction program, has already forced some displacement of tenants. Much greater displacements may be caused in the near future as a result of technical developments. If the mechanical cotton picker is perfected, most of the demand for tenants and wage workers in the eastern Cotton Belt may be eliminated. But apart from the cotton picker, the spread of improved methods already in use is likely to cause considerable displacement. Mechanical equipment and the use of check-row planting are capable of eliminating much of the labor requirement for cotton raising, except in the picking season. It is questionable whether the landowner of the Old South will continue to provide subsistence the year round for workers who are needed only during a brief season. To compete with the rapidly developing areas of the West and of foreign countries, the plantation of the Old South may be forced to adopt its competitors' method of hiring workers only during the season when their labor is required. In that case a large fraction of the 1,000,000 tenants of the old Cotton Belt may be converted into constant migrants from job to job or displaced from agriculture altogether.

MANUFACTURING AND MECHANICAL INDUSTRIES

The industries the census classifies as "manufacturing and mechanical" rank third in giving jobs to Negro women; the number so employed was 101,000 in 1930. The situation with regard to employment opportunities for Negro women in this group of industries differed widely from that of the domestic and personal service occupations in the 10 years between 1920 and 1930. While thousands of new workers found jobs as domestic employees, laundry operatives, or beauty-shop attendants, there was actually a small decrease in the total number of Negro women employed by industry.

Why this decrease took place cannot be explained. One possible cause is that in 1920 there still were many Negro women employed in the jobs they had taken on during the war-time period of labor scarcity, and that by 1930 most of these jobs would have reverted to white men or women. Another explanation concerns the tremendous technological changes in industry, which have been focused largely on the elimination of low-skilled jobs, the jobs on which the majority of Negro women are employed.

Numbers employed.

The tobacco industries employed more than 18,000 Negro women in 1930. Next in rank as employers of Negro women were the clothing industries, with 16,000; food and allied products, with 11,000; textiles, with 6,000; lumber and furniture, with 3,200; iron and steel, with 1,600; and paper, printing, and allied industries, with 1,400. Miscellaneous manufacturing accounted for an additional 10,000 Negro women, and dressmakers not in factories for 20,000.

General characteristics of factory employment for Negro women.

In a compilation by the Women's Bureau of data on

Negro women in industry from reports for 15 States secured over a number of years, it was shown that large numbers of these workers were employed in sweeping and cleaning of various kinds. Others worked at tasks that might be classed as general labor. This would include most of the work done in glass factories; in textiles, with the exception of hosiery; in the wood industry; in tobacco rehandling; in meat packing, in which a third of the women reported worked with casings and chitterlings; the washing of cans or dishes in bakeries, canneries, and food establishments; peeling or pitting fruit; cleaning and pressing clothing, done by over half the women reported in clothing establishments; sorting rags in rag and paper factories; and picking out nut meats. Though in some instances Negro women were found in considerable numbers to be operating machines of various kinds, many of these involved only simple operations or repetitive movements, though some required dexterity or a degree of skill. A few Negro women were in supervisory posts or in other positions involving more or less responsibility.

Though current information concerning the work status of Negro women in industry is scattered and not comprehensive, brief summaries from various reports may serve to outline certain economic problems such women must meet.

Tobacco stemmeries.

In 1934 the Women's Bureau made an investigation of the current pay rolls of the stemmery departments in three branches of the tobacco-manufacturing industry in Virginia and North Carolina. An overwhelming majority of the stemmeries' employees were found to be women, largely Negro women, whose work consists of removing the stem from the leaf and of getting the tobacco ready for the various processes of manufacture.

Weekly earnings were very low. Of all employees included, one-tenth earned less than \$5 for the week, not far from half earned less than \$10, and about 87 percent received less than \$12. Over four-fifths of the employees covered by the survey worked full-time hours.

That many workers in the tobacco plants have failed to earn a livelihood and required supplementary aid from relief agencies was evident from the firms' pay-roll data and facts from the emergency relief agencies. In a tobacco manufacturing center the emergency relief administration reported in one month that slightly more than 10 percent of its case load was experienced tobacco-factory workers. In another city over one-sixth of the cases in one month, and over one-seventh in another month, were families in which one or more members were tobacco workers. In one city, roughly two-thirds of the families were receiving full relief, and relief of tobacco workers in this city was averaging a few thousand dollars a month.

In regard to the ability of the industry to pay a living wage, the Women's Bureau report stated:

Labor cost is comparatively such a small part of the total

production costs that the wage levels could be raised without making an appreciable difference to the industry. One stemmery, with 2,000 employees showing an average monthly wage of \$10.82, had produced during the week over 3,000,000 pounds of strips, or enough tobacco for a billion cigarettes. The cost of labor operations was less than a penny a pound of prepared tobacco, or less than a mill per package of 20 cigarettes.

Negro women in Tennessee factories.

Not far from 1,000 Negro women in factories were included by the Women's Bureau in its State-wide study of women in Tennessee industries in the winter of 1935-36. In the middle Tennessee area the average week's earnings for the 361 women covered were \$7.30. Most of the women were employed in tobacco plants and warehouses on jobs such as stemming, stripping, and hanging tobacco leaf.

One large hosiery mill employed women on boarding—that is, pulling damp stockings over the heated forms to shape and press them, an operation usually done by men and boys.

Negro women formed a larger proportion (18 percent) of all women employed in manufacturing in the western area of the State, especially in Memphis, than elsewhere. They were working as operatives in one or more establishments in the shelling of nuts; in work on cotton and burlap bags, especially the rehandling of bags; in various jobs in wood-working, caning chairs, and making fruit boxes and baskets; in packing cosmetics and other pharmaceutical products; and in making paper boxes for cosmetics. The average weekly earnings of Negro women in this section were the exceedingly low amount of \$4.50. Women worked 4 or 5 days a week picking nut meats for earnings of \$2.55. Year's earnings were reported for 62 Negro women in Tennessee factories. For this group the average was only \$345.

Negro women in Chicago factories.

An informal survey by a branch of the Chicago Y. W. C. A. of a relatively small number of Negro women industrial workers in the spring of 1936 provided material of interest. Describing the cotton-garment industry as one of the more important industries employing Negroes, the report states that usually the work is power-machine operating on a straight piece-work basis. During the N. R. A. the minimum rate for experienced workers was \$13 a week. Of nine girls experienced in this field, five showed earnings of less than \$10 after the N. R. A. ceased to function. One earned less than \$5. Other summarized statements from the report follow:

Another industry in which many Negro girls have had experience is that of dates and nuts. Though employed for only a very short season of the year, earnings are notoriously low. Of 17 applicants who worked in this industry since the N. R. A., all specified their earnings to be less than \$10 a week. Six of them were earning between \$5 and \$7.50. Two of them made less than \$5. Though hours of work were not reported, it is known that the industry works full time during the busy season, during which all these girls were employed.

Another industry that employs chiefly Negro workers is the used burlap bag industry. Reports of workers indicate that wages are somewhat higher, or between \$10 and \$12.50. This is an industry with disagreeable and hazardous conditions. The presence of dust and lint in the air, unless carefully controlled, is a well-known hazard, and the material is disagreeable to handle and hard on the hands.

Of 91 girls who had factory experience since May 1935, half earned less than \$10 a week, and of the industries represented the lowest paid was the date and nut industry, with an average of \$6.72 a week. These figures present a glaring contrast to the general average of \$14.97 a week for women workers in Chicago factories in 1935, compiled by the division of statistics and research of the Illinois Department of Labor.

Another study by the same Y. W. C. A. was concerned with employment possibilities of Negro women workers in the Chicago needle trades. The investigation showed that Negro workers were chiefly employed in the cotton goods lines, generally somewhat less skilled. Of the 48 firms about which information was secured, only 13 employed any Negro workers. All but two made house dresses and aprons. Even within this industry, opportunities were distinctly limited. Several of the firms employed Negroes only on pressing, a job that requires unusual strength and endurance, on the ground that "the Negro can stand heat better than a white girl." Comparatively few concerns had both white and Negro workers on power-machine work. The few that did employ many Negro workers employed virtually no white workers.

NEGRO WOMEN AS WHITE-COLLAR WORKERS

Numbers employed.

In 1910 there were only about 30,000 Negro women in professional service; in 1920 there were almost 40,000; in 1930 there were 63,000. These figures represent an increase of more than 100 percent from 1910 to 1930. Clerical workers within the ranks of gainfully employed Negro women numbered only 3,000 in 1910; in 1920 there were 8,000 such workers; and in 1930 there were 11,000. More than 7,000 Negro women worked in stores in 1910; in 1920 this group had increased to 11,500; and in 1930 the total was 14,500.

In all, Negro women in what may be termed "white-collar occupations"—in transportation and communication, trade, public service, professional service, and clerical occupations—totaled but 91,600 in 1930, or only about 5 per cent of the Negro women gainfully occupied. On the other hand, native white women in the same occupations totaled 4,330,000 in the same year, or 56 per cent of all gainfully occupied white women of native birth.

Reasons for small numbers of Negro white-collar workers.

Naturally there are many reasons for this disparity in the proportions of Negro and white workers in the better paid, more highly skilled, occupational fields. Educational facilities for Negro workers are notoriously inadequate in some sections of the United States. Negroes



Y.W.C.A. SECRETARIES IN CHARGE OF U.S.O. PROGRAM FOR COLORED YOUTH

have had a relatively short span of years in which to demonstrate their ability in certain fields requiring training and skill. But there is an additional reason of much significance, which is clearly suggested in a recent publication of the Work Progress Administration of Georgia, a State which contains only slightly less than a tenth of all the Negroes in the United States, entitled "Occupational Characteristics of White-Collar and Skilled Negro Workers."

The shift downward in the present [the shift from white-collar to skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled positions] was caused by the depression. White-collar occupations among Negroes depend, for the most part, upon the Negroes themselves. The doctors in the main have only Negro patients; Negro lawyers have Negro clients; and Negro teachers must teach in Negro schools. Negro business has a limited market, as it is confined to the Negro group. During a period of retrenchment, certain phases of white-collar work continue while others disappear. Negro businesses with no reserve disappear during periods of depression, and the clerks, stenographers, and messenger boys hired must find other occupations. Generally, there is nothing else but to go to lower occupational levels.

With the great bulk of Negro workers, men and women, receiving wages that permit of only the barest subsistence—as has been shown by the data for various occupational groups in the present report—the reasons for the limitations of Negro white-collar opportunities become plain. Unless Negro workers have adequate purchasing power, they are unable to secure needed professional services; to buy from Negro stores; to attend Negro theaters and other places of amusement; to protect themselves through insurance agencies and the like. Increased white-collar employment among Negro workers inevitably will follow a rise in the economic status of all Negro wage earners.

Negro white-collar workers in Atlanta.

The Georgia Works Progress Administration report, to which reference has been made, contains interesting data concerning Negroes—both men and women—in white-collar jobs, including those of the professions, in Atlanta. This survey, conducted from January to July 1936, covered nearly 5,000 persons. Of 1,500 Negro women white-collar and skilled workers in Atlanta, just half reported their usual occupation as professional in character and nearly one-fourth as clerical. With regard to their jobs at the time the survey was made, however, only 38 per cent were employed in the professions and

about 19 per cent in clerical work. Over a fifth of all the women were unemployed.

The average monthly income for just over 3,300 white-collar and skilled workers in this Atlanta study was \$60. The professional workers had the highest income (\$72-\$75), the skilled workers followed (\$70), and the clerical workers ranked lowest (\$63).

Negro professional women.

Teachers accounted for nearly three-fourths of Negro professional women in 1930, and trained nurses for nearly one-tenth. In addition, at least 1,000 Negro women were employed as actresses, as college presidents and professors, and as musicians and teachers of music.

Information on the salaries paid to Negro teachers is available in a report prepared by the Office of Education of the United States Department of the Interior issued in 1934. Salaries of rural teachers in 17 States and the District of Columbia averaged \$945 for white teachers and \$388 for Negro teachers. For teachers in junior and senior high schools in 17 States and the District of Columbia, salaries averaged \$1,479 for the white and \$926 for Negro teachers.

Additional information on salaries paid Negro rural teachers in a number of States is available in a 1937 report of the National Education Association. The lowest annual salary for Negro rural teachers was \$150 in Mississippi, where white teachers received an average salary of \$458, more than three times as high. The highest Negro average for rural teachers was \$812 in Maryland, in which State white teachers averaged \$1,474.

Negro women as clerical workers.

A survey of office workers in seven cities was conducted by the Women's Bureau during 1931 and the early part of 1932. In two of these cities—Atlanta and Chicago—an effort was made to secure information for Negro women employed in the types of office covered. The two races were not employed together in any office visited, but five insurance companies and one publisher in Chicago, and two insurance offices in Atlanta, all controlled and managed by Negro ownership, were found to employ Negroes. In both cities several banks and other types of office employing Negroes were visited, but they had only from one to three women, all combined being too few to form a representative group.

In the 6 Chicago offices 101 Negro women, 90 in insurance and 11 in publishing, were included. Their average monthly salary in insurance was \$80, as compared to \$94 for the white women in insurance. In Atlanta insurance offices the average monthly salary for Negro women was \$55, in contrast to \$94 for white women. In Chicago about one-third of the Negro women (including 11 in publishing), and in Atlanta about seven-eighths, were on salaries of less than \$75 a month. Four-fifths in Chicago and 98 per cent in Atlanta were on salaries of less than \$100.

One fact of special interest in this study was that the amount of general schooling and the attendance at busi-

ness schools were higher for the Negro women than for the study as a whole. In Chicago 50 of the 100 women with education reported had completed high school and 34 had some advanced training. In Atlanta 16 of 56 were high-school graduates and 23 had had some advanced training.

Negro women in retail trade.

Though no information is at hand showing wages or working conditions of Negro women in stores, an article in the November 1937 issue of the Monthly Labor Review on "The Negro in Retail Trade" may serve to indicate something of the present status of employment opportunities in this field. The report states that—

Negro proprietors in 1935 were operating 23,490 retail stores in the United States—a decrease of 2,211 stores as compared with 1929. The reduction in the number of such stores in the South was 2,936. In the North and West, however, they increased respectively by 490 and 235.

In 1929 the pay rolls of these stores totaled \$8,528,000; in 1935, \$5,021,000, a drop of 41.1 percent. For the same years the total value of sales was respectively \$101,146,000 and \$48,987,000—a decline of 51.6 percent. Within this period, 1929 to 1935, the number of retail stores operated by proprietors of all racial groups expanded by 110,803, although the chain-store units decreased by 19,828, pay rolls dwindled 30.2 percent, and the aggregate value of all sales declined 32.5 percent.

MEASURES FOR IMPROVING THE ECONOMIC STATUS OF NEGRO WOMEN WORKERS

The public must pay heavily for the substandard working and living conditions of many thousands of Negro women workers. When people have no jobs or their wages are too low for adequate support, they still must have food, shelter, and clothing. The presence on relief rolls in 1936—the last date for which there is accurate information—of one in every four Negro women workers, and the fact that two-fifths of these unemployed women were the economic heads of families, constitute a situation that is of grave import to the citizens who must support these women and their families.

Experience has shown further that low living standards are costly in that they breed crime and disease, which affect all citizens. Workers desperate for jobs are the prey of unscrupulous employers, who by using cheap labor are able to undercut employers willing to pay fair wages. At times such workers are available as strike-breakers. When a significant proportion of the population is forced to live at a substandard economic level, all classes—farmers, factory workers, merchants, professional men—are deprived of the benefits resulting from adequate purchasing power in the hands of those who would spend if they could.

Because of the relation of the problems of Negro women to those of other community groups, it may be helpful to discuss certain measures for improving the economic status of Negro women that seem most practicable and realistic at the present time.

Social and labor legislation.

In general, woman labor has benefitted markedly from

social and labor legislation during recent years. State hour and minimum-wage laws, workmen's compensation provisions, the joint Federal and State social security program, have served to make more secure and satisfactory woman's economic status.

Unfortunately, Negro women workers have by no means shared equally with white women in the benefits of these provisions. Workers in agriculture and domestic service, largely because of the difficulty of labor-law administration, have been exempted from the coverage of most of the laws; and it has been shown that the great majority of Negro women workers are to be found within these two occupational fields.

Take minimum-wage laws, for example. Such laws to date have been enacted by 25 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. In general, minimum-wage legislation has been designed for several purposes: To set a bottom limit below which wage rates cannot fall; to assure to women wages adequate to meet the cost of a healthful standard of living; to end sweatshops and cut-throat competition among employers; to relieve the community of supplementing low wages by public and private relief; and to establish on the part of workers the purchasing power that is necessary to bring about and maintain industrial recovery.

However, rough estimates made in the Women's Bureau indicate that only about 1 in 10 of all Negro women workers are covered potentially by minimum-wage legislation, though about one-fourth of all such workers are to be found in States having minimum-wage laws. Of all women, Negro and white, roughly 4,000,000, or well over one-third of all employed women, are covered by such laws. It is evident that minimum-wage laws thus far have not been an important factor in raising the wages of the bulk of Negro women workers.

On the other hand, one aspect of minimum-wage administration during recent months has been of considerable benefit to large numbers of Negro women. When the States with newly enacted laws have begun to issue individual wage orders covering specific occupations, almost universally they have covered first the service industries where many Negro women are employed. Laundries, hotels and restaurants, and beauty shops have been among the first industries for which wage rates have been set.

Improvement in educational and training facilities.

In addition to general schooling, specialized training in an occupational field at some stage of the education process is desirable for all young Americans. It is also very useful for older workers who have not had such opportunities at an earlier period. The worker with no special training whatsoever is at a serious disadvantage in seeking employment in an age that is rapidly becoming more highly specialized.

The present demand for skilled domestic workers, so much greater than the supply, points to an urgent need for better training facilities for such workers. In the

spring of 1937, in the neighborhood of 400,000 applicants describing themselves as domestic employees were registered in the active files of the United States Employment Service though a survey conducted by the Employment Service as of January 1, 1937, had indicated that at least 500 cities were facing a shortage of trained household workers, and possible placement in these cities over a year might reach nearly half a million.

An important contribution to household training has been made by the Works Progress Administration in many centers throughout the country. For example, during the year 1936, training projects for domestics were conducted in 184 centers. Of 3,629 persons receiving certificates as domestic trainees, 3,591 were placed through the facilities of the many offices of the United States Employment Service. Other agencies, public and private, offer training facilities for household workers, though the combined efforts of all these groups fall far short of taking care of the existing needs in this regard. Schools are badly needed also for vocational training in other lines, such as beauty culture, millinery, and power-machine operating.

Trade-union organization.

Recent developments in American trade-unionism have been significant in relation to Negro workers. For instance, one of the most important union contracts affecting women workers in American trade-union history was negotiated in August 1937 between the United Laundry Workers Local 300 of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America and a large New York City firm which is in the towel and uniform supply laundry business. The agreement covers drivers and also about 8,000 inside workers, by far the greatest proportion of whom are women. Among the important provisions in the contract are the following: A limitation of hours for women to 45 a week; a minimum wage for inside employees of \$15.75 for a 45-hour week, with a guaranteed minimum of \$15 a week for 11 months; a raise in wage rates of at least 10 percent, with a minimum raise of \$2 unless a greater raise is required to bring the weekly earnings up to \$15.75; a week's vacation and 3 days' sick leave with pay for each worker after 1 year's service; and 7 fixed holidays with pay. An additional provision of particular interest which is made a condition of the continuation of the agreement is to the effect that "the union shall make all reasonable, customary, and usual attempts authorized by law to procure contracts with the said competitors of the employer within a reasonable time from the date thereof."

But it is far simpler to talk about the economic problems of Negro women workers and to suggest possible remedies than it is to take definite action toward their solution. These problems have taken deep root in the social and economic structure during past decades, and only untiring effort on the part of Negroes themselves, aided by the Nation's socially minded citizens, will succeed in eradicating them.

A Self-Help Program of Household Employees

BY DORA JONES

IN January of 1936 the domestic workers of New York City were given a new lease on life. For at this time a charter was issued by the Building Service Employee's International Union, an affiliate of the American Federation of Labor, whereby domestic workers were given the opportunity to place themselves on the same basis as other workers.

The people who banded themselves together to start this organization were of many nationalities and races. There were Finnish, Swedish, Negro, Japanese, Polish, Irish, and German. Because of their mutual needs these various peoples successfully worked together to form the broad basis on which our Union stands today.

From the first our Union carried on an intensive organizational drive increasing the membership by making numerous individual adjustments such as raising wages, securing back pay, shorter hours, and better conditions on the job.

The many undesirable problems confronting a domestic worker causes this field of work to be looked upon as a last resort. The wages received by a domestic worker as compared with any other industrial worker is far below the average. For instance the average monthly wage for a household employee in New York City is \$35.00 per month plus room and board (and about \$5.00 per week throughout the country) while the *minimum* wage of an industrial worker is \$14.00 per week. Not only is there a difference in the wage scale but the household employee has no limit to the number of working hours required per week, while the industrial worker has a 40 hour maximum work week.

The fact that the average household worker gets room and board plus salary—even though the room may be an attic, a dinette or the basement, and the board—only left-overs, or inferior foods, this is very inadequate compensation. Since the average household worker must live in the home of her employer she is consequently shut off from her own family and friends, except in the brief periods off duty. Because of the endless hours of work one's health is quickly and easily impaired. Statistics show that over 51% of all accidents occur in the homes. It is beyond a shadow of doubt that a great many of these accidents happen to the household employee who in the majority of cases becomes an object of charity because of lack of protection through social legislation.

Household work offers a variety of types of work that can be very interesting and pleasant. Provided the tasks are planned and cooperation assured it is possible to do all the work in an average home in 60 hours a week. Many people complain about the shortage of good, reliable, efficient houseworkers. The Union feels that there is not a shortage of household employees but there is a

shortage of well-paid, desirable jobs and employers who treat the employee as a human being.

In the past unemployment flooded the household employment field with workers from other occupations: the less experienced factory workers, salesgirls, married women whose husbands had no job or who had poorly paid jobs, students who had to work while in school. All of these helped to lower the already low standards.

Added to this, one of the greatest blight of unemployment today is the "slave markets." These are held on the street corners in many large cities where Negro and White domestic workers congregate in the hopes of securing a few hours employment at 15 or 20 cents per hour. Many of them are trying to keep a home and support children on their hourly earnings—a truly remarkable feat.

The "slave markets" have been and are still one of the greatest detriments to the growth of the Domestic Workers Unions. As long as these workers remain on the streets they are a challenge to the already existing low wages and inhuman conditions. Some work has been done by the Mayor's committee of New York City on "Street Corner Markets" made up of the Domestic Workers Union, the Urban League, the Womens Trade Union League, the N.A.A.C.P., the Jewish Social Agencies and others, to wipe out "slave markets" through the establishment of free placement bureaus for day workers. The main weakness in the new placement bureaus lies in the fact that there is no floor to the wages being paid the workers. We feel that this is just a beginning, and that only through strong trade union organization can household employment be placed on the same level as other industries.

For the past few years our Union in cooperation with the Women's Trade Union League has sponsored state legislation: namely "Inclusion in the Workmen's Compensation Act," "60 Hour Week," and "Inclusion in the Minimum Wage Law," and on a National scale "Inclusion in the Social Security Act."

Due to the lack of any social legislation for household workers our greatest emphasis has been placed on "Inclusion of Domestic Workers in the Workmen's Compensation Act." We feel that this is a piece of legislation that can be most easily handled and will offer 300,000 workers protection by law in the state of New York.

Many of the individual tasks of household employment are themselves hazardous. For example the Workmen's Compensation Law specifically states in Section 3 that the following employments are hazardous and must be covered by compensation insurance: canning fruits and foodstuffs, removal of ashes and garbage, work as janitor, work at cleaning windows and buildings, work



A NEGRO WOMAN IS IN CHARGE OF THE DINING ROOM SERVICE IN ONE OF WASHINGTON'S FINEST HOTELS

in bakeries and laundries. Many of the hazards involved in this work are the same for household employees. *Yet the very same kind of work when performed by a household employee is unprotected.* That such workers should be covered by workmen's compensation insurance seems self-evident.

We have already mentioned the extremely long hours and the effects it has on one's health and although we do not feel that a 60 hour week is ideal, this is one way of putting a ceiling to the number of hours by law that a domestic worker must work. We have also mentioned the extremely low wages and the self-evident need for a minimum wage law. There is no other field of employment in which one may work for 80 or more hours a week and get only 6 or 7 cents per hour—the equivalent of coolie wages.

To quote Senator Wagner on his reason for introducing an amendment to his original "Wagner Labor Act" to include domestic workers, "In recent months the tragic lesson has been clearly taught that armaments alone cannot make a nation secure against the total attack of wanton aggressors now dispoiling a large portion of the civilized world. Armaments alone cannot protect a Nation weakened by insecurity and social maladjustment. In our program of total defense there must be no appeasement of the enemies within our gates, no relaxation of our drive toward the progressive achievement of social security for the men, women and children of America."

Household employment is a field in which are found about one-half of the Negro women employed in gainful work. It is an occupation for Negro women of all ages and they are apt to remain in this field for all their working lives because race prejudice bars them, to a great extent, from many other kinds of jobs. Thus the inclusion of household employment in the social security program would be an important factor in giving more security to the Negroes and in taking many of them off relief.

The recent conference of the Negro Woman's Committee for Democracy in National Defense went on record urging support of legislation for inclusion of household workers, agricultural workers and workers in non-profit organizations under the Social Security Act. We feel that this committee is in an ideal position to help along this line, and to further a democratic life for all the people.

A study on Household Employment made by Jean Collier Brown.

I. What is wrong with household employment?

At the time of the last U. S. Census 90 per cent of the two and a quarter million domestic workers were women. This number constitutes the largest single occupational group of employed women in our country. Not far from one-half of all household employees are Negroes and a half of all Negro women workers are found in this field.

In January 1937 at least 500 cities faced a shortage of trained household workers—according to estimates of the U. S. Employment Service, and possible placements in those cities might have reached nearly half a million. Nevertheless in July of the same year 400,000 applicants describing themselves as household workers were registered in the active Employment Service files.

Where workers need jobs and can't find them, and at the same time employers want workers and can't get them, something is very wrong. In attempting to diagnose just what is the trouble it may be useful to discuss first—what kind of a job does the domestic worker want, and what kind of a worker does the employer want?

Workers' requirements of a job.

The worker wants a job where—

Hours are reasonable—fair provision is made for time off and vacations.

If she "lives in," food and lodging are adequate.

Wages are comparable with other skilled occupa-

tions, and are raised as job performance improves.

Opportunities for social life and companionship apart from the job are available.

Duties are relatively standardized.

Protection is offered in case of occupational illness.

Employment relations are objective and professional.

Employer's requirements of a worker.

The employer, on the other hand, wants a worker who—

Is skilled, intelligent, and reliable.

Has and maintains a high standard of health.

Can adapt herself to the conditions and needs of a particular home.

Workers' objection to household employment.

However, workers seem to have great difficulty finding jobs that meet their specifications. They find in too many cases that—

Daily and weekly hours are exorbitantly long—overtime is rarely paid for.

A regular 8-hour day and a 40-hour week such as thousands of factory employees take for granted seem only a rosy ideal to such workers.

There is no standardization of employment. There are no definite wage scales based on experience, skill, or amount of work to be required during the course of the day.

On the job they are cut off from companionship with their families and friends.

Often they are looked down upon socially.

They are excluded from certain kinds of social insurance, and legislative protection afforded other types of workers.

Training facilities are inadequate and unstandardized.

Employers' complaints about workers.

Employers, seeking competent workers, complain that—

The girls lack all-around skill. They may be good cooks, but poor cleaners, etc.

References mean very little as to a worker's actual ability.

Many girls refuse to assume responsibility; they are not prompt; they refuse to consider the employer's best interests.

II. Basic Problem in the Field of Household Employment.

Apart from the special difficulties of the workers or of the employers there are certain basic problems in the field of household employment that create difficulties for all parties concerned. Some of these problems may be solved by workers alone, others by employers; still others are dependent upon a change in community standards and attitudes. Among such problems are the following:

No accepted performance standards.

There are no accepted performance standards for domestic workers. This results in:

- a. No relation between skill and wages and a resulting difficulty in making placements. Employment officials testify to inadequacy of "references."
- b. No similarity of training procedure either in private homes, in public vocational schools or in private institutions. The term "trained worker" is practically meaningless.
- c. Without accepted standards of skill, unions of domestic workers have no tool with which to bargain.

No Accepted job classification.

In the same fashion there are no accepted job classifications—job terminology is vague and largely meaningless. Workers and employers alike are hampered severely by this situation.

Erroneous concept of type of worker needed.

The concept prevails erroneously, that "anyone can do housework" and that this occupation can readily absorb displaced workers from all other fields. On the contrary, domestic service demands intelligence, initiative, stamina, and a high type of manual skill.

Inadequate training facilities.

Training courses are usually most inadequate and frequently lose sight of important practical considerations—

- a. Vocational schools in general have taught isolated skills such as cooking, cleaning, ironing, etc., with no relation to assumption of responsibility by a girl for a whole day's program.
- b. Training of domestic workers has seldom been in the hands of teachers who had any understanding or sympathy with the whole picture of household employment and problems of individual domestic workers.
- c. Too frequently training in household employment has been designed for girls who could not qualify for other types of employment.

No labor market data.

Few data exist on the state of the labor market in relation to domestic workers such as the extent to which workers who were employed in this occupation before the depression have suffered from competition from workers displaced in other fields—

- a. In particular, in middle western cities the problem has loomed large of the competition regular domestic workers meet with business-school students who work for nothing but room and board.

Meager data on employment conditions.

While information is collected regularly by State and Federal agencies on hours, wages, working conditions, etc., of workers in most types of employment, very meager data are available on employment condi-

tions of domestic workers. Other types of information lacking concern living costs for domestics and their contributions to dependents—

- a. What data are available, are concerned largely with wealthy homes or those of employers of "comfortable" means—giving a distorted picture in relation to the total situation.
- b. Traditionally, no data exist on wages, etc., in the deep South.
- c. No data exist on the wages, etc., of domestics employed by industrial workers.

Such legislative protection.

Legislative protection for domestic workers is difficult to obtain, difficult to enforce—

- a. There are no organized groups to put pressure on legislatures.
- b. Strong opposition arises from various quarters.
- c. Practically no precedents for enforcement are yet in existence.
- d. Legislation covering domestic workers will be very costly to enforce.

Serious health problems.

Among the most serious of household employment problems are those relating to health. Living intimately within a family group the health factors of both worker and employer become of great importance.

Desirable job potentialities rarely considered.

The potentialities of household employment as a desirable occupational outlet are seldom considered by guidance officials; rather than throwing the weight of their influence in the direction of raising employment standards in this field, it is ignored as a desirable activity for able girls.

- a. Particularly in Negro groups is the subject of household employment avoided rather than met realistically.

Workers difficult to organize.

The problems faced by unions of domestic workers in educating their members to the value of collective activity for better standards seem very difficult.

The Whip Changes Hands

BY CLARK S. HOBBS

In the Baltimore Evening Sun, May 16, 1941

Reports have been current for some time past that Baltimore housewives are having kitchen trouble. The stories all run to the same general theme, namely, that domestic servants are asking for higher pay and shorter hours, and that they are backing up their requests with the announcement that, if the requests aren't granted, they will give up housework and enter the profession of making gas masks.

There is much truth in these reports. Many experienced domestic servants have, in fact, retired from their cus-



HOUSEHOLD EMPLOYEE REGARDS WITH PRIDE HER "WORK OF ART"

tomary occupation; and young girls are reluctant to enter it. In consequence, housewives are finding it very difficult to fill their vacancies. Private employment agencies and the Maryland State Employment Service are kept busy registering demands for cooks, maids and general houseworkers, and are unable to take care of these demands. Housewives are finding it increasingly difficult to get a competent servant without very definite agreements regarding wages, working hours and "free time."

Many housewives are puzzled by all this. They cannot understand why it is now so difficult to get domestic help to work from 7 A. M. to 9 P. M. for \$5 or \$6 a week, "just as they always have in the past."

But there are plausible explanations of the present situation. Domestic service is the largest female industry in the United States, an industry employing more than 2,000,000 persons, ninety-five per cent. of whom are women. In Baltimore it is Negro women, primarily, who predominate in the industry. And the national defense program is opening opportunities to Negro women which they have never had before.

For many years, the market for domestic servants has been what the economists call an employer's market. That is to say, there were many more applicants than there were jobs so that housewives could pick and choose. Mr. Hitler has changed all this. The national defense emergency has created such a demand for competent workers that the tables are turned. It is now the em-

RECENT RELEASES ON "THE NEGRO WOMAN IN NATIONAL DEFENSE"

From the Federal Works Agency, Works Progress Administration:

The wide range of training and experience gained by a yearly average of 90,000 Negro women who have been benefitted by WPA projects argues well for their effective use in the National Defense Program, Alfred Edgar Smith, Staff Adviser, Federal Work Projects Administration, said today after checking on the immediate labor supply of competent women workers whose skills are in demand during the present emergency.

"It must be remembered that during the first World War the opportunity came for Negro women to join the growing and effective army of American women engaged in defense pursuits of all kinds," the Staff Adviser commented. "In what is known as the war industries, Negro women were recruited in the making of shells, gas masks and airplane parts. The employment of these women in the manufacturing and mechanical industries alone increased by over fifty per cent."

"While it is true that most war industries have undergone many technological changes since the first World War, it is also true that women as a whole have become more mechanical-minded. Many of them have studiously kept up with the many technological changes in most productive industries. In one instance, a young Negro woman holding a commercial pilot's license won the confidence and admiration of a board of education and the U. S. Civil Aeronautics Authority sponsoring ground and flight instruction classes for out-of-school students as part of a WPA Adult Education Program. Thirty-one women have been enrolled at one time in vocational education classes under the WPA Emergency Education Program. Other women have become skilled operators of smaller types of power machines used principally on WPA sewing projects."

"The results of this kind of training and experience show up in the recent jobs secured by ten Negro women in the manufacturing of electrical goods," Mr. Smith emphasized. "Current employment records also show that four Negro women have jobs in metal foundries, others are optical goods workers, sheet metal workers, and press and punch-press operators. In terms of the huge defense work ahead, these are but small beginnings in today's all-inclusive defense effort. They indicate, however, a virtually untouched labor supply that proved its worth during the world conflict of twenty-five years ago. It is a singular case, indeed, when one finds that the work training and work experience of the WPA has not directly or indirectly prepared Negro women to find an effective place in the civilian or industrial phases of the National Defense Program."

The persistence of Miss Willa Brown, one of the few Negro women to hold a commercial pilot's license, is responsible for the WPA-Civil Aeronautics Administra-

tion flight instruction school located in Chicago. In 1939, Miss Brown and other members of the National Airmen's Association appealed to Washington to help more Negro aviation enthusiasts get basic training—looking toward advanced air combat flight instruction.

Results: \$6,000 was made available to remodel two large classrooms in Chicago's Wendell Phillips High School where the WPA-CAA project was set up under Board of Education sponsorship; two obsolete bombers suitable for flight training were secured for some sixty non-college and flight demonstration students who enrolled when the classes got under way. The CAA was impressed. Other classes are planned for cities where interest of Negro citizens in aviation is strong.

From the office of Production Management, Labor Division:

Negro women are playing an increasingly important role as skilled workers in the national defense program, Thelma McKelvey, Special Assistant in the Labor Supply Branch of the Office of Production Management, told the National Association of Colored Women, Inc., Tuesday evening (July 29, 1941).

"Our program of total utilization of our human resources includes plans to increase the participation of Negro women as well as men, for they are a vital part of our labor supply."

Some progress has already been made in this direction through the work of the Negro Employment and Training Branch of OPM, the speaker pointed out.

"Through the activities of Dr. Weaver's office and other branches of the Labor Division of OPM, hundreds of Negro women have been employed during the last year as power machine operators in the garment industries of St. Louis and Kansas City, Mo.; Chicago, Ill.; Philadelphia, Pa.; and in other urban centers.

"As of June 1, 1941, more than 400 colored women were employed as gas-mask assemblers in the Edgewood Arsenal at Baltimore, Md. One of the largest parachute manufacturers in the country has placed Negro women on parachute assembly work in Manchester, Conn., as a result of OPM activity. And the State Employment Service offices in various communities have placed colored women in defense industries in such unusual occupations as sheet metal workers, press operators, jewelers, sign painters and electrical goods assemblers. A recent report of the Bureau of Employment Security shows more than 117 placements of this nature in recent months.

"Of equal importance, too, has been the expansion of job opportunities for Negro women in the traditional fields in which a large number of them have worked. This expansion has been accompanied by an increase in wages and an improvement in working conditions."

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