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Harry L. Hopkins Papers

F. B. I.

July 6, 1943

PERSONAL AND ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~  
BY SPECIAL MESSENGER

Honorable Harry Hopkins  
The White House  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Harry:

Supplementing previous information furnished to you regarding the National Convention now being held by the March on Washington Movement in Chicago, I thought the President and you would be interested in the following data concerning events which occurred on July 1 and July 2, 1943.

In connection with its National Convention the March on Washington Movement held a meeting on "Jim Crowism in America" at 9 P.M. July 1, 1943, in the Metropolitan Community Church, Chicago, Illinois. Approximately 600 persons were in attendance, including 25 white people. Reverend Archibald J. Carey, Jr., Pastor, Woodlawn, A.M.E. Church, Chicago, presided and introduced the following speakers, all of whom are Negroes: Layle Lane, March on Washington Movement Secretary, New York City; Carl Hansberry, President, National Negro Progress Association and wealthy Chicago real estate owner; Cordelia Green Johnson, President, Beauty Culturists League of America, Jersey City, New Jersey; Hank Johnson, United Mine Workers Union representative, New York City, and Dr. George Edward Haynes, Federal Council of Churches in America.

All of the speakers criticized the alleged discrimination against and segregation of the Negro in labor and in the Army. Reverend Carey stated that Negroes should not go to Burma to save freedom if they can't get freedom in Birmingham. He asserted that the cause of the riot in Detroit is to be found in the heart of the Negro who is oppressed. Layle Lane suggested that Negroes can secure political, social and economic freedom by use of the purchasing power and the right to vote found in the total Negro population. Hansberry advised Negroes to take advantage of all legal means to secure freedom from racial discrimination, and Cordelia Johnson suggested that Negroes take advantage of all opportunities to join interracial groups. She also quoted a colored friend who had stated that she would rather shoot her son that see him in the uniform of the United States Army, but continued by stating that she had tried to dissuade her friend from this course of action. Johnson stated, "Why should he (referring to the Detroit Negro) fight for freedom when his own citizens were being shot by policemen who were sent to

protect him." She also advocated legislation to abolish "Jim Crowism" and placed the responsibility for the existence of "Jim Crowism" in the Army and in labor on the Federal Government. Bayard Rustin urged members of the March on Washington Movement to follow a direct action non-violence program to secure negroes' rights at the present time. He stated that freedom would not come from the use of laws, but will come from the application of the non-violence technique. He asserted that violence would be suicidal and freedom would not come by the use of force.

Voluntary contributions were solicited from those in attendance at the meeting and the booklet, "Jim Crow in Uniform -- War's Greatest Scandal," was sold. Copies of "Labor Action," an alleged Socialist newspaper, were distributed.

On July 2, 1943, a meeting was held from 10 A.M. until 1:15 P.M., the purpose of which was to present the program of the March on Washington Non-Violence Direct Action Good Will Committee. Only delegates were permitted to attend this meeting and members of the press were excluded upon the instructions of A. Phillip Randolph, National Director. Several members of the Socialist press, however, whose names are presently unknown, were permitted to attend. Dr. William Edward Nelson, Chairman of the Non-Violence Direct Action Good Will Committee, and Dean of the School of Religion, Howard University, Washington, D.C., presided. The following persons who are members of this committee addressed the delegates: Miss Rita Baham, Chairman of the Chicago Local Non-Violence Committee and member of the Committee on Racial Equality; Dr. J. Holmes Smith, former missionary to India from New York City and operator of the Harlem Work Shop; Reverend James Farmer, Resident Secretary of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, Chicago, Illinois; Bayard Rustin, Field Representative, Fellowship of Reconciliation, New York City; Mrs. Melba Wilson, Fellowship of Reconciliation representative, Columbus Ohio, and E. Pauline Myers, National Executive Secretary of the March on Washington Movement.

The speakers stressed the importance of not responding to violence on the part of white agitators and policemen, and a direct action non-violence program was suggested whereby Negroes would be educated by a March on Washington Movement school for teaching the non-violence technique. This technique, it was stated, would consist of approaching white proprietors of restaurants, bus companies and theaters to secure service for Negroes as well as whites. The program as outlined by speakers Rustin, Baham, Smith and Myers stressed the fact that Negroes should passively resist until service is given. No alternative action was decided upon in the event the services are denied.

The non-Violence Direct Action Committee submitted a five-point resolution which, according to confidential informants, will probably be adopted in its entirety. This resolution recommends that the program of non-violence direct action take effect in the fields of employment, civil and constitutional rights, "Jim Crowism" and

voting. It was decided upon by the committee during the morning session of July 2, 1943, to experiment with the non-violence technique in the cities of New York, Washington, Richmond, Chicago and Los Angeles. It was also recommended that the March on Washington Movement establish an institute to teach the non-violence technique with headquarters to be located in New York City. In addition, it was advocated that paid National Director of the March on Washington Movement be appointed.

At the afternoon session, which began at 2 P.M. on July 2, 1943, the discussion was devoted to the problem of "The Negro in Peace and Post-war Planning --Africa, the Caribbean and the United States." The speakers at this session were: Dr. Lawrence Reddick, a March on Washington Movement delegate from New York City who is connected with the New York City Library; Dr. Eric Williams, Professor of Social and Political Sciences, Howard University, and Dr. Louis Wirth (white), Professor of Sociology at the University of Chicago.

Dr. Reddick stated that the four freedoms should be applied to Africa now and remarked that the foreign colonies in Africa must be given self rule. Dr. Williams asserted that the four freedoms should be granted to the Islands of the Caribbean. He stated that natives of these islands are now without decent living conditions, education or recreational program, which has caused West Indians to flock to the United States. Therefore, he concluded, this country should extend to these islands the freedom of the Atlantic Charter. Dr. Wirth acquiesced in the opinions of Reddick and Williams and stated that a new world is being created now in which the minorities will exist as they do at present. He concluded by urging the Negroes to carry on the fight to win the present war. As yet no formulated program has been submitted to the conference regarding postwar planning for Negroes.

As further information is received relative to the National Convention of the March on Washington Movement, it will, of course, be made available to you.

With best wishes and kind regards,

Sincerely yours,

(s) Edgar