

# National GRAPEVINE

By CHARLEY CHEROKEE

## Can You Take It?

**P**ANNING THE NEGRO PRESS is considered smart as hell by Negro intellectuals. This is pretty silly, chum. True, some industrialists, and some here-today-gone-tomorrow white government executives regularly consult Abe Harris of Howard on economics, Charley Johnson of Fisk on rural life, Allison Davis of Chicago U. on anthropology, and others. This is swell. But when it comes to the practical matter of getting a Negro a job, or a piece of bread, or a farm to scrabble on, or respect as a man, the Negro press has to take up the cudgel. Whether the intellectuals like it or not, the Negro press is our first line of attack and our last line of defense.

Unhappily for all concerned, the Negro press is also pretty silly sometimes, and in fairness to the intellectuals, it deserves a panning. For instance, Negro publishers organization comes to town periodically and whines to Navy about doing right by our little Sams and Georges. Navy listens politely, laughs up its gold-braided sleeve, and says to itself, "Pfui!" That's that.

Why migawdamity, if the Publisher's association is anything more than a name, every colored-published paper will devote a month of issues to headlines and real facts on dirty criminal Navy Jim Crow, and publish letters from the mess-boys. Chum, before that broadside, Navy will move, maybe not all the way, but it will move.

Incidentally, publishers finally persuaded Presidential Secretary Early to admit a Negro correspondent to White House press conferences. That is they got a promise. But Steve Early wanted a name immediately, and publishers are still jealously disagreed over choice of a correspondent to represent all papers in a full time job at a good salary to be paid in part by all papers. Ted Poston wisely turned it down, and unless they stick to one of their second choices, the whole thing will blow up. The Negro press can really dish it out, but can it dish it out in concert, and can it take it?

## Home Front

**NEW YORK**—Mayor LaGuardia suspended white New York Patrolman David Liebman, who made a Civic League speech denouncing "Little Harlem" section of Brooklyn as responsible for all crime and stating: "When these people (Negroes) taste liberty north of Washington, there is no stopping them."

**RICHMOND, VA.**—White southern liberal Virginus Dabney urged in his Times-Dispatch, that segregation in Virginia street cars and buses be abolished, because both white and colored realize it's foolish and just a source of race irritation. Careful to assure his white friends that he is not advocating "equality,"

Dabney got a pat from colored folk, even those who say he was stung by Charley's admonition of "either be a real liberal or shut up."

**ST. PAUL, MINN.**—Well-meaning Eleanor Roosevelt, answering complaint on her If-I-Were-A-Negro article in which she advocates that Negroes not demand too much, showed further lamentable influence of her clever white-southern liberal friends, who believe that only white people know what is good for Negroes. But it was a good honest try. (Charley still believes as months ago, that any white who writes on If-I-were-a-Negro is wasting paper and looking for trouble).

## Unedited Excerpts From Letter To Charley

**CAMP SAN LUIS OBISPO, CAL.**—"The Jim Crow Shack at camp can thank Chaplain (Captain) Grant Reynolds and his wife for shades at the windows. If they had been allowed to stay here longer, the place might have been livable. More power to the Reynolds who stand up for their people."—A soldier. (This and other names withheld).

**CAMP BOWIE, TEXAS**—"I speak four languages and am learning a fifth. But here in Texas if a colored soldier seems to be intelligent, he is pushed aside. All I do is carry five gallon gasoline cans."—A soldier.

**FORT LEONARD WOOD, MO.**—"The boy asked the white guard to take him back to the guard house, but the guard told him to either work or get his head blown off. He fired on the boy and the buck shots tore through the left shoulder of his coat. They threw him in solitary and sent us back to work under that trigger-crazy guard."—A soldier.

**FORT HUACHUCA, ARIZ.**—"I joined to make a career of the army. It seemed the most wonderful existence in the world. I have changed. Why? The Negro soldier is a ready victim of the evils attendant to discouragement."—An officer.

**CHARLESTON, S. C. NAVY YARD**—"Four boys in my class were three to 10 minutes late to class and got five days in the brig. They report that it's worse than a concentration camp. They were beaten, cursed and called 'nigger' by the white marine guards. There are only 15 of us but we are ready anytime for anything. Our day will come."—A sailor.

## Thuh Ahmed Fo'ces, Suh!

The 92nd out in Arizona is plenty disturbed, and with reason. They've got wind of fact, they will soon be shipped to a combat zone, and the intelligent ones in the outfit say they are not ready. They have been in training long enough, gosh knows, but the training has been second rate, and the boys writing home say: "If they send us into combat like this, it's suicide, and further proof the Negro is no fighter."

Some of the boys have hit on the main trouble. The white officers of the 92nd, they say, are either incompetents or malcontents shelved away there as punishment, or it

southern whites who think they "understand all Negroes." The boys are pretty bitter about it, and the white officers are afraid of the bitterness. Chum, there's heat on the desert.

Charley still maintains (and nobody has shown him to be wrong) that the average Negro draftee is retarded but not so dumb he has to be put in a labor battalion. He may take three to six months longer to train than the white boy but he CAN comprehend, and if he ever is ADEQUATELY trained, he will be the best combat material in the world. Charley dares Army to try it.

## Flash

**CAPITAL TRANSIT** is making FEPC look foolish, as this week marks one year since FEPC delivered its ultimatum, and no Negro motormen or conductors yet. . . . Darklings lost a real friend when Senator Barbour died last week, as he was never afraid to introduce a bill aiding colored people. . . . Race Relations in OPA and OWI are ready to crash as agency division chiefs either knuckle to southern pressure or are replaced by anti-Negro reactionaries (Watch this). . . . W. P. Dabney discusses white juvenile delinquents at length in his Cincinnati Union, explains that colored juvenile delinquents are well taken care of in the white press. . . . WAC and WAVE recruiting drives have failed miserably, which serves 'em right, but means more men drafted. . . . Gen. Patton must be color blind. If he had slapped a colored soldier he would have had his promotion long 'ere this. . . . To those 67 key members of National Alliance of Postal Employees who wrote that swell-elegant fan letter, Charley says a fervent thanks, chums, you helped more than you realized. . . . Associated Press took low when Dr. Alain Locke of Howard U. took it to task for reporting his Utah speech as if he was advising Negroes to ask for less. He says ask for more. . . . Excellent Xmas gift: War bonds and stamps, subscription to Chicago Defender, or subscriptions to Negro Digest, Crisis, Opportunity, South Today, Common Ground, New Republic and PM. . . . BUY ANOTHER BOND, MISTER, but don't feel apologetic—you don't need to. Negroes had a flourishing civilization in Africa when the only whites were the barbarians who came from the East or down from the North to raid and plunder. KEEP 'EM SQUIRMING!