

Activities of Women's National Organizations

BY REBECCA STILES TAYLOR

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS EVERY DAY, BUT TODAY THE CALL IS LOUDEST

"They do me wrong, who say I come no more,
When once I knock and fail to find you in;
For every day I stand outside your door,
And bid you wake, rise, fight and win."

—Anon.

The awakening day is at hand for the millions of Race women, citizens of this country and its outlying possessions—just as it is for the men of the Race and while all women have had to trail their men through ages past, our entire Race group would move up faster if Race men would weigh the value and potential strength of their women to the extent that, instead of hampering and undervaluing them, they would support and strengthen them in their efforts to lift the standard of the group. If the "Black Cabinet" can produce a better, more loyal, more fearless male leader than the female leader who now leads—trot him out, but be sure that he has a past record for worthwhile achievement that will support his presumption to national leadership.

The Day Is Now

The awakening day is here if the events of the past few months are to be seriously considered. Although much has been written and said about the 700 and more representative women who attended the annual meeting of the National Council of Negro Women in Washington, D. C. in October, there is still much unwritten and unsaid.

The Fight On All Lines

Following closely on the heels of the President's executive order concerning equal participation of all workers in defense industries without discrimination because of race, creed, color or national origin, and the establishment of the Committee on Fair Employment Practice with two prominent Race men thereon, which came as a result of the proposed "March on Washington," the fine stand of Dr. Dorothy Ferber and Jennetta Welch of Alpha Kappa Alpha for Race women on the Advisory committee to the War Department, Women's Section which, backed by the letter of Dr. Bethune to the President and the Secretary of War, made a place for a Race woman on that committee as a representative of 100,000 Race women; the three day sessions of the National Council of Negro Women with encouragement from Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt; the work of the appointed Race representatives of the several departments together with the program of the National Council of Negro Women—all these are but mere high points of what is really happening, but they prove that there is an awakening, a rising and a big fight going on which must not cease until democracy in its truest sense is won for all. Anything short of this will not satisfy. In this fight women, youth, together with men must be united if our goal is to be reached.

First Lady Expresses Herself

At the Washington meeting, Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, after listening to a number of Race speakers, said, "There will be no discrimination in the operating policy of the Civilian Defense Program." Speaking in the capacity of assistant to Civilian Defense Director, Fiorello LaGuardia, Mrs. Roosevelt continued, "As Negro women you have a vital part to play in the Civilian Defense Program. You are going to defend your way of life more whole-heartedly than ever before. I hope that every one of you will go back to your community and take advantage of EVERY CONTRACT that you have in order to make this program of Civilian Defense effective. We hope to have bureaus of information and placement in every community and I hope that in no bureau will there be discrimination on account of

race, creed or color. We are asking that all citizens be treated alike and I think we will succeed."

Dr. Bethune Presents First Lady

On presenting Mrs. Roosevelt Dr. Bethune said, "This great woman came here to learn from Negro women, as well as, to bring us a vital message." She characterized the meeting as the most important gathering of Negro women in America, in that "We have leaders here from every national Negro Women's organization in this country and they represent the powerful influence of colored women in every strata of economic life."

Mrs. Roosevelt Hears Speakers

Other speakers on the program which was a symposium on the role of the National Council in world affairs were Mrs. Vivian Carter Mason, Mrs. Sue Bailey Thurman, Miss Dorothy Height, Dr. Charlotte Hawkins Brown, Miss Elsie Austin and Mrs. Carita V. Roane.

Other Prominent Speakers

Atty. Eunice Hunton Carter illustrated the typical Negro American family in varied work-a-day activities. Out of her knowledge as assistant district attorney of New York City, she stimulated the imagination as to how a true democracy should operate. "No nation," said Mrs. Carter, "is a true democracy when one-tenth of its people are half free. Our enemies are not all across the sea or outside of the United States. We have them with us."

"I say the nation is half free because we have jim crowism, segregation, and discrimination even in the armed forces as well as the lynching mob evil. In order to preserve democracy, we must first clean our house in order that we might not be held up to scorn by the rest of the civilized world."

Civil Service Commissioner

Mrs. Lucille F. McMillan, white, civil service commissioner declared that labor shortage under the defense program was lowering employment barriers against women and that women had never had opportunities comparable to those of the present time. She also said that the fields in which women may participate through the defense program will continue to be open to them after the passage of the emergency. At the conclusion of her talk, Dr. Bethune stated, "We hope that as a result of the encouraging changes coming to us through the opening doors to women will see a larger number of Negro women able to enter. These are the days in which the Negro is being urged to persistently knock at the door. We ask that photographs be omitted and that only finger prints used. I pass the government buildings frequently as the workers are being let out," continued Dr. Bethune, "here and there I see a brown face. I hope that the democratic spirit will open wider the doors and allow us to come in and participate. Women like Mrs. Roosevelt and Mrs. McMillan will help us."

Noted Musicians Present

Miss Mary Caldwell Dawson, founder and organizer of the National Negro Opera and past president of the National Music association, sang. Miss Camille Nickerson of Howard university accompanied her.

Congressman Frances P. Bolton

Republican Congresswoman Frances Payne Bolton of Ohio addressing the women at the dinner meeting, said that America with all her faults offered minority groups the best opportunities in the world and that it was the women's duty to keep up the fight they are making to make this a better land in which to live. She was introduced by Mrs. Estelle Massey Riddle, president of the National Association of Graduate Nurses. Congresswoman Bolton said, "We are going to go through darkness greater than any the world has ever seen. If we do not know what darkness is, we will not be able to share in rebuilding the

world when this great carnage is over. We have made hideous mistakes in this country. We have done things of which we certainly can not be proud. But we must be a part of the constructive scheme of things on earth or else we will be swept away. There is nothing without spiritual value."

Walter White Speaks

Walter White, of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, said, "This is going to be a long and bitter fight and we dare not indulge in overconfidence. We must give up the idea of racial superiority; we must give up the notion that a handful of folks should have while the great masses have not; we have to give up economic, racial and political prejudices; they must be cast overboard if democracy is a reality and will extend to them, and all other Americans."

Hattie Quinn Brown

Hattie Quinn Brown, noted educator, author, lecturer and past president of the National Association of Colored Women, declared the meeting to be one of the greatest she had ever witnessed. Miss Brown was given an ovation on being presented.

Mary Church Terrell

Mrs. Mary Church Terrell, linguist, educator, author of "A Colored Woman in a White World," recently off the press, who was the first president of the National Association of Colored Women, was presented at the dinner meeting. She stated that her faith in Dr. Bethune's leadership and program had appealed to her from the origin of the council and she was expecting almost any kind of bee to be coming out of her bonnet next.

National Leaders

Christine S. Smith of the African Methodist Episcopal Missionary Mite society, S. Willie Leyton, Nannie H. Burroughs, Ruth Bennett, Henrietta Gibbs of the Women's Auxiliary to the National Baptist convention; Buena Kelly, Hattie Williams of the Daughter Elks; Mrs. Wolf of the National Council of Jewish Women, Beth Leon Siegal, vice president of the National Jewish Congress, Lester Granger of the National Urban League, Dr. Mordecai Johnson of Howard university, Miss Florence Reed of Spelman college; Mrs. R. S. Abbott of the Chicago Defender; Mrs. Robert Vann of the Pittsburgh Courier, Mrs. Scott of the Atlanta World, Mrs. Bertha Perry Rhodes of Philadelphia; Janie Porter Barrett and hundreds of other prominent women were there, awakened, rising, fighting and determining to win.

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PHYLLIS WHEATLEY GIRLS COUNCIL

The Phyllis Wheatley Girls Council held its regular meeting at the Phyllis Wheatley home Thursday evening, Nov. 13. The Council made a donation to the Navy Blue orchestra. Mrs. Nettie Stratton, a former resident of the home was a guest and became a member of the Council. Mrs. Ruth Edwards was appointed secretary of the sick committee; at the close of the meeting refreshments were served. Elizabeth Davis, reporter.

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IMPROVEMENT SUNSHINE CLUB ELECTS OFFICERS

The Improvement Sunshine club met Monday, Nov. 17 at 4754 Langley avenue and elected the following officers: president, Mrs. Thornton Evans; vice-president, Mary Whitaker; financial secretary, Frankie Mitchell; corresponding secretary, Marie Stephens; treasurer, Lula Long; chaplain, Clara Williams; parliamentarian, Mrs. B. Kenney; child welfare, Mrs. C. Dockery; education, Ovella Chinn; sick, Mrs. E. Hobbs; reporter, Mary Horton. The club closed its meeting with a delicious luncheon served by the hostess.