

National Grapevine

By Charley Cherokee

MY MAMA DONE TOL' ME. Uncle Sam is mighty anxious about what colored folks are a-thinking. Explosive mixture of war and race has scared Hell out of Uncle. Government chiefs concerned with public opinion, morale, propaganda, espionage, sabotage and such, have orders from the big house to keep a sharp inquisitive eye on non-whites. OFF ("Figgers and Facks") called a too-hurried ill-planned conference of "Negro leaders" which didn't help matters. Now, Defense Information Coordinator Donovan, assisted by Howard U's Eugene Holmes, is coercing "typically Negroid" D.C. public school teachers into allowing photographs of their school and home life, for distribution as propaganda in South America. Seems the Japanese have told the Latins all about how Negroes are treated in the U.S. Distribution of pictures of poor Jim Crowed colored teachers should assist the Japs in South America, immeasurably. Whoever had the idea better stop braying and pull his ears in.

London Columnist Hickey (Ld. Beaverbrook's paper) says the U.S. better change its attitude toward its Negroes pronto if it expects them to aid the war effort or resist Axis propaganda. Coming from a Britisher, this is revolutionary. Uncle Sam still thinks he can control the thinking of colored people without reforming the treatment accorded them. It would be a neat trick if he could do it. He can't. Neither can the British, but they still try. Goodwilling, Economic Expert Tawney of London U. spoke at Howard U. last week and admitted frankly when questioned by Al Smith (WPA) concerning West Indian labor policy, that England took no cognizance of race in labor.

Uncle Sam may as well come on out from behind the taboos and stock phrases of race relations. He knows well enough public opinion can be controlled only by treating colored civilians and soldiers as humans. Everybody keeps forgetting this war is between people, not races.

LITTLE COFEP

President's Committee on Fair Employment Practice has asked for a showdown. Commerce Department Hearings disclosed a Negro Messenger, Leslie Perry, forced to do clerk's job and denied promotion. Committee Secretary Cramer, impressed with merit of case and exasperated with impotency of the committee, requested COFEP chairman to tell the White House the committee must have teeth or may as well give up. Committee Member Earl Dickerson carried the ball and well, during most of the Commerce Hearings, with little assistance from other lukewarms. Sarnoff did not show up and it was whispered he feared to face Commerce Secretary Jones, who can break Sarnoff's RCA if he desires.

McLean share concern of Cramer and Dickerson and all anxiously await something definite from the

President, or ultimate fate of Mead Bill (2265) which would give needed teeth. McLean has given up speaking engagements so as to give more time to COFEP. Presently, attention is turning to discrimination in training and education. Commissioner Studebaker will be called up April 13 to answer questions.

In OEM, 65 colored clerks were about to be reduced to laborers because their Jewish supervisor thought it good economy, breathe easier since COFEP Field Officer George Johnson stayed their execution by calling plot to attention of OEM heads. In Rochester, AFL voted a committee to investigate local discrimination but refused to invite COFEP for local hearings. In Bayonne, N. J., and other communities local volunteer Fair Employment Councils lend aid to COFEP with mutual benefit.

DEFENSE, OR, LE'S WHUP SOME HAIDS!

Negro troops stationed in the South are catching more Hell than usual. Murder in Arkansas, beatings and minor riots in Mississippi and Louisiana. Expect a major race riot any day. Army faces alternative of moving colored troops North and West or ordering white M.P.'s to fight for Negro soldiers and beat civilian heads for a change. Strangely, a certain colored army chaplain who publicly advocated sending colored troops South, is now directing a recreation center in Hartford, Conn.

Congress has a new excuse for paying no attention to complaints of race discrimination. They simply say Japanese propaganda is making "our Negroes" restless.

Opprobrium directed at OFF should fall in the lap of the Tennessee Jew, owner of a chain of theatre dumps for colored, who is the real race relations officer. He is a man of ideas, most of them objectionable, who leaves his assistant, Ted Berry to face the firing squad.

Astounding ingenuity is used every day to disqualify apt trained Negroes who seek defense employment or unusual army assignment. If tricky questions don't get them, and all other unheard of qualifications are met, the white doctors are the last line of defense. They can always find something wrong, and do.

A Facts and Figures propaganda pamphlet, "Divide and Conquer" will hit the country about the first. Axis tricks are exposed. Of Hitler it says: "He is trying to set capital against labor, white against black, Catholic against Protestant."

President's Executive Order has agreed to a movie short showing extent of gains made by Negro workers in quest of skilled and semi-skilled employment. They want a little urging from the Negro public. Lowell Mellett is the man, you know what to do.

In short, the Walter White-William Pickens feud has spread to a Walter White-Frederick Patterson, N.A.A.C.P.-Tuskegee, Democrat-Republican brawl.... Howard U. students in R.O.T.C. got second-loose commissions last Thursday.... Colored news correspondents got a free ride, eats and such, to Camp Lee, Va., from D.C., last Friday.... Lester Walton has a secret four-month special commission from the White House to do something in connection with defense.... And New York Times writers who refer to the U.S. as "We Anglo-Saxons" should see some of the Anglo-Saxons at Forty-seventh and South Parkway.

THAT SETTLES THAT, DEPARTMENT

Mayor LaGuardia: "Any Negro doctor who can qualify, can be appointed to any hospital in the city of New York."

Gov. Talmadge: "There ain't no nigger good as a Georgia white man."

President Gallagher: (Talladega college): "Gov. Talmadge is a minor symptom of the spiritual malnutrition of the region."

President McLean: (Hampton-COFEP): "Some discrimination is due to ignorance on the part of those who seek defense jobs of the right, clear, solid, procedure, for getting those jobs."

Father Divine: "My spirit vibrates in every joint, sinew, limb, bone,

vein, cell and atom of your body, and besides it's my hotel."

James Weldon Johnson: "We are under the necessity of breaking down an old stereotype that as workers, we are shiftless, unreliable, and incapable."

Gen. Thomas Holcomb (U S. Marine Commandant): "Scram!"

Lin Yutang (Chinese author of Best Sellers): "I love the Negro porters, messenger and elevator boys, sporting wherever they are, with their sharp winks and sly smiles, but I profoundly commiserate with the serious-looking Negroes going about with their filoves, spats and their civilization."

Joe Louis: "Another lucky night!"

That No. 7 on the Hit Parade was Lucky Roberts' "Moonlight Cocktail." . . . That was Alain Locke and Franklin Frasier of Howard U. dining at the Mayflower with Maurice Dartigue, Haitian of education and agriculture.... Colored colleges are disappointed over refusal of War department to enlarge R.O.T.C. program. Honorary fraternity PHI DELTA KAPPA voted to repeal Negro ban, two-to-one. Jeanetta Welch (AKA) appeared before McKellar committee deciding whether to terminate NYA and CCC, and argued for continuance.... Fed. Housing has reaffirmed non-discrimination clauses in defense housing contracts.... Will Alexander of OCD is loaned to OFF.... Robert Ming is with Price Administration.... Georgia court of appeals rules colored patrons cannot ride in white taxis and vice versa.... FSA has a trailer camp in Alexandria for Negroes displaced from home when War department built huge buildings in Virginia.... Since the Treasury bond department came out with that "Mammy" picture and ditty, Charley hasn't got the heart to mention defense bonds, just keep 'em squirming!