

THE SEPTEMBER TRIP

We visited Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Detroit, Michigan; Denver, Colorado; and Chicago. Milwaukee was reactionary, with no organized Peace or Progressive groups. Yet there are liberal elements who will listen. A business man belonging to the Bahai faith, who came to know us through Shirley's books, invited us to stay at his home and spearheaded our visit. Without him we would have accomplished little. He arranged a reception and press conference at his home and presented us to the Mayor's Human Rights Commission of which he is a member. He signed the call for a public meeting with the rather timid pastor of a colored church where the meeting was held. The attendance was 1500, half white. The Journal gave us a good column interview on the case and a half-column report on the meeting; but after our departure it ran a leading editorial, condemning me for encouraging race animosity by calling the Korean war a fight between white and colored people. The Sentinel was silent.

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Detroit is reactionary and tense. The local people furnished me with a body-guard which may or may not have been necessary. Nothing untoward happened. There is both a Peace and Progressive group but they aimed their efforts almost entirely toward the Negroes. Many whites did not know that there were any white defendants. The colored workers were earnest but inexperienced. The meeting in a large colored church was attended by 700 persons, of whom a third were white. Unions were well represented, but upper class Negroes absent. Hill, the colored candidate for the city council, presided and was outspoken. One local colored paper refused to run the advertisement of the meeting; the other and the local edition of the Pittsburgh Courier did. The white press was silent.

Denver was liberal and willing to listen. Most of the influential Negroes rallied around us and the meeting was held under the auspices of the NAACP. Peace advocates were organized and the Democrats expressed interest in our case. A round table of prominent persons, including the dean of the Episcopal cathedral, was held. The two chief papers carried interviews and pictures. About 2000 persons were at the meeting, of whom a half were white. A group of professors from Boulder came to the meeting.

In Chicago the Progressive and Peace elements are not well organized. Our chief support came from the unions, while the Negro community for the most part did not know of the meeting. The race situation in Chicago is curious. Leading Negroes are being persuaded not to complain or agitate. The Urban League was threatened with exclusion from the Community Chest if it took part in the meeting against the Cicero riot. A similar riot at Fernside was kept entirely out of the press. Attorneys for the Cicero victims are among those indicted for conspiracy to create disorder. Percy Julian, the prominent chemist, has had his house bombed, was refused permission to eat with his fellow chemists at the Union League Club and lately was threatened with loss of his job if he presided at a dinner which would discuss discrimination in medical schools and hospitals. Our meeting was filled to standing room by about 700 people, three-fourths being white trade unionists. When the Chicago NAACP inquired as to the advisability of giving support to our case, Roy Wilkins replied "Don't touch it!"

Shirley Graham will report to you personally about her own colorful experiences and the money raised.

W. E. B. Du Bois