

## ANOTHER NEW NEGRO

Several months ago the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters sent an organizer to Jacksonville to enlist new members into that rapidly growing labor union. Bennie Smith, the organizer detailed to this task, is a capable, energetic and courageous man. From the day of his arrival he was very successful in getting new members. Naturally the hat-in-hand Negro Pullman officials were considerably perturbed. As more and more Pullman porters signed up at the behest of Mr. Smith, consternation struck the little band of Pullman Company representatives. One can just hear them saying, "We must get rid of this fellow Smith." Knowing their city well, they began to spin a web of intrigue, using all the prejudices and hatreds rampant there against Negroes with a spark of manhood.

As representative of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters in Jacksonville, Bennie Smith had been selling copies of its official organ, The Messenger. This was used as the most convenient excuse for having Smith arrested. For, they doubtless told the white police, here was a magazine that had the temerity to demand in no uncertain terms the same rights and privileges for black people that are enjoyed by white people. Social Equality! The limbs of the law shuddered, and allowing murder, robbery and assault to pursue the even tenor of their way unmolested, they descended on Mr. Smith for the crime of selling a publication that dares to militantly demand that blacks have all the rights of whites. Just think of it! Petty Negro job-holders of the Pullman Company, themselves likely at any time to be the victims of color hatred and persecution, egging the unspeakable police of a Southern city to persecute one of their own group! One is constrained to ask, "WHAT kind of NEGROES are those?"

Hounded by the police and the black minions of the Pullman Company, Bennie Smith has been forced to leave Jacksonville. But he fought to the last. In a telegram to A. Philip Randolph, the General Organizer of the Brotherhood, he said:

Am fully mindful of grave seriousness of situation and personal danger. Conscientiously feel Brotherhood cause is so righteously important that a firm stand should be taken. Have fully decided to remain and meet the consequences. This means that I am willing to make the supreme sacrifice. Have sacredly dedicated my all to the promotion of Brotherhood's noble cause. Advise at once. Being constantly intimidated by Pullman Negro officials:

BENNIE SMITH.

An attorney, a very prominent Negro lawyer, was retained by the Brotherhood to represent Mr. Smith, but the liberty-loving public officials of Jacksonville would not allow him to appear in behalf of his client. This is in line with the well-known Southern chivalry and sense of fair play. Despite the fact that some of the most prominent white people in the United States telegraphed to the officials of Jacksonville asking them not to disgrace their city (assuming that were possible) by such persecution, Bennie Smith continued to be hounded. Realizing his great danger, General Organizer Randolph ordered Smith to leave the city of terror, and only then did Bennie Smith leave. But despite the danger he intends to return and fight.

Bennie Smith's courage is indicative of the spirit of the New Negro and is in accord with the best traditions of militant labor unionism. It brings to mind the tragic occurrence at Bogalusa, La., several years ago, when two white labor organizers died before the guns of the lumber company police, defending to the last their Negro comrade. From the ranks of ordinary workingmen and women come our real fighters, those who are prepared to lay down their lives for the right to be free. It was so in all our race riots of the last few years since the late war. It was so recently in Coffeyville. It will be increasingly so in the future.

Bennie Smith, we salute you!