

The Democracies Face The "New Negro"

By WITTIE ANNA BIGGINS

More than 20,000 Negro citizens, taxing the seating and standing capacity of Madison Square Garden, New York City, to the limit on Tuesday evening at the mass meeting of the March-on-Washington Committee, headed by A. Philip Randolph, turned the attention of all nations of the universe to this democratic country, when in a body they demanded complete equality of opportunity of privileges for all races of people; and in an eight-point pact declared an end to discrimination in the army, navy, air, and marine corps; and in American life wherever it exists.

No longer the shiftless, disorganized being—offspring of the Uncle Tom type—the white man has long thought him to be—but the New Negro—faced his country, not only seeking, but demanding that the rights belonging to American citizens be accorded him as well as the millions of others who have come to American shores and found freedom and equality of opportunity.

Denominational lines faded away, and religious leaders of many, many faiths and their congregations merged with political and civic leadership and their followers, and with those of labor, and in one solid front made known to the nations the demands of a neglected people. So unusual was such a move on the part of the Negro that of the white speakers invited to participate on the program only one, The Rev. John La Farge, Associate Editor of the American Roman Catholic publication, dared accept the invitation and put in his appearance. He contended that religious minded men and women Catholic, Protestant or Jew, wherever they may be, have the right to

demand personal freedom and protection of that freedom.

The eight-point program offered to fight discrimination against Negroes and other minority groups declares:

(1) Abrogation of every law which makes a distinction in treatment between citizens, based on religion, creed, color or national origin.

(2) Legislation to reinforce the constitutional guarantee that no person shall be deprived of life liberty or property without due process of the law, to end the disgrace of lynching.

(3) Enactment of the Pepper Poll Tax Bill, so that all barriers to the exercise of the right to vote are eliminated.

(4) Abolition of segregation and discrimination in the armed forces.

(5) Withholding of Federal funds from any agency which discriminates in the use of the funds.

(6) An end to discrimination in jobs and job training.

(7) Representation of Negro and other minority groups on administrative agencies.

(8) Representation for these groups on all missions, political and technical, which will be sent to the peace conference.

And Walter White, secretary of the NAACP, convinced authorities of how far reaching is the intent of the program by advocating that President Roosevelt call a conference to formulate a Pacific Charter, inviting Chiang Kai-shek, Ghandi, Nehru and Adad, of India, President Manuel Quezon of the Philippines, and Haile Selassie. "Such a charter would provide equality for hundreds of millions of colored people throughout the world," contended Mr. White.