

Meet 'Mr. Inside' Of The New Negro

By JAMES BOOKER

Ralph D. Abernathy, a five-foot, eight inch, 200-pounder is aptly called "Mr. Inside." As the No. 2 man behind the Rev. Martin Luther King ("Mr. Outside") in the "New Negro" crusade in Montgomery, Ala., he has the rough job of keeping the drive on the march when Rev. King is away on speaking tours, and of handling various internal activities before they would get to Rev. King.

Yet, despite his duties, the powerfull - built 30-year-old Baptist preacher is a strong figure in his own right.

In pep rallies and meetings in Montgomery it is Rev. King who discusses problems and approaches in the broad sense, developing the thinking of the individual.

Then comes the hard-hitting, emotional, homey approach from Ralph Abernathy. He, equally as much as Rev. Martin Luther King, stirs the 50,000 Negroes of Montgomery to great emotional heights with his soul-searching Baptist preachings. Together, the two form a perfect team appealing to the inner and outer self of the individual.

Full Cooperation

"Our success in Montgomery is based on four things," Rev. Abernathy said in an interview here last weekend with the Amsterdam News. "Our cause is just, we have the full cooperation of the Negroes in Montgomery—and the cooperation of people of goodwill everywhere, and we have a non-violent approach."

A native of Linden, Ala., Rev. Abernathy is a graduate of Alabama State College in Montgomery and Atlanta University. Married, and the father of a two-year-old daughter, he has been preaching at the First Baptist Church in Montgomery for four years.

It was shortly after Rev. King arrived in Montgomery that the two met and have become inseparable friends in addition to co-workers. Each considers the other his closest friend.

"Rev. King is one of the great Christians of the 20th Century. God has prepared him for the role he has today with a great love for people. He is not seeking wealth or power, but has faith and charity. He believes in shar-



ing publicity," Rev. Abernathy said.

During the past week Ralph Abernathy maintained as rigid a schedule as Rev. King has at times. He made 12 speeches throughout Pennsylvania, and arrived in New York from Montgomery early Saturday to see Rev. and Mrs. King off to Ghana, before substituting for Rev. King that night in a speech at the Brooklyn Urban League.

He had to rush back to Montgomery Saturday night in order to preach at his church Sunday morning.

"This is my country and the South is my native land," he says in discussing why he has played such a prominent role in Montgomery's fight. "We have been successful in our fight because we are determined."

Often Sound Alike

Like King, Abernathy often uses words and phrases which have strong emotional impact. Being close friends also, their words often sound alike.

"We hear great cries for gradualism, imposition and the like. These cries are the bereaved groans of friends of segregation. Segregation is dead and we have an excellent group of pallbearers in the United States Supreme Court."

"There is a new Negro in the South today," the vice-president of the Montgomery Improvement Association said. "All of the Uncle Toms have died or have come North."

Abernathy believes the "New Negro" struggle has gone over the entire Southland, and within a few years will help to end discrimination and segregation in nearly all forms of life.

"We will not let up in our fight, however, until a complete victory is won," he said.

Respected Like King

Today, as sections of the South arise in defiance of the longstanding segregation and discrimination patterns which have been imbedded as a result of slavery, Ralph Abernathy is one of the pillars in the fight to end these patterns. He is respected and revered as much as King.

Although his home has been

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bombed, and numerous threats have been made on his life along with other leaders in Montgomery, he fights with greater determination to achieve the goal.

"We cannot win victory in Montgomery alone, but must work and fight just as hard throughout the South," the motion-rousing preacher said. In this area, Rev. Abernathy and Rev. King have taken over leadership in a Southwide ministers group that plans to stage a new March on Washington if President Eisenhower fails to speak out against violence and intimidation being waged against Negro leaders.

"They have locked us in jails, and have thrown bombs at us. Our struggle will not stop even if we fill all the jails in the country. They might succeed in destroying the leaders, but they will never be successful in destroying the courage and determination in the hearts of 16 million Negroes in the United States," he asserted.

If the President fails to speak out to halt current racial violence in the South, Rev. Abernathy promises that the Negro leaders in the South will lead a march of one million "black and white people to Washington, D. C.

With success having been met under him in the bus boycott, the Chief of Operations of the "New Negro" crusade can be counted on to produce.

That's why he is called "Mr. Inside."