

Southerners Protest New Deal Discrimination [TRANSCRIPTION; EXCERPTS]

Practically All WPA Workers Discharged in Mississippi

VICKSBURG, Miss., (By J.T. Johnson for ANP.)

Negro Mass meetings are being held all over Mississippi in protest of the fact that nearly all Negro WPA workers have been dismissed within the past few weeks by the Federal authorities in charge. It is said that this is done in an effort to force Negroes to work for 50 cents per day or seek jobs as cotton picker at 50 cents per hundred. Both of which they say means starvation in the face of the present high cost of living though the Negroes point to the fact that none of the white WPA workers have been discharged but it is said that large numbers of white new recruits are being put on WPA jobs daily.

It is said that the number of Negroes discharged with in the last few weeks run way up into the thousands. The WPA scale theretofore paid to Negroes was \$30 per month maximum for Negroes and minimum for whites \$42. It is said that skilled Negro labor is always classified as unskilled and that white skilled labor is classified as skilled. It is said that this discrimination is made between the races in pay through both be doing the same class of work.

Whites In, Negroes Out

It appears that not over a half dozen Negroes have been given what is known as white collar jobs in this state under the WPA or any other Federal set up, and they got their jobs only a few weeks ago, though it is estimated that there are fully 10,000 or more white collar workers among the whites on Federal jobs and that in a state where the Negroes are in majority. Very naturally the Negroes ask: "Where is the law and the constitution?" "Are we living under that alleged government where all men are said to be equal under the law or are we not living under an administration under which discrimination and a blighting system of case reign supreme?"

Jim Crow Invades State Capitol

It is said that the U.S. Public Health Service has offered to give Mississippi a Negro public health physician to talk to Negro physicians of this state on the

subject of public health, since the same Federal Public Health officer would not address white and colored physicians at the same time, and this job offered the Negro physician coming under the Mississippi State Board of Health his office should be in the state capitol where the State Board of Health is housed, but rather than permit that this Negro physician's coming to the state has been delayed a month to give time to throw up a little shack for an office down in one corner of the capitol grounds, over behind all other buildings.

The Negroes declare that another reason why they have all been dismissed practically from the WPA was in order to force them to do domestic service at from a dollar and a half per week to two and a half per week, notwithstanding the fact they say that all of them as a rule have several dependents whom they must feed, clothe and shelter out of their weekly wage, in the face of the ever mounting high cost of living.

Colored Farmers Hard

It is reported that the unemployment situation among Negroes has been rendered much more acute in the South by the forcing of thousands of Negroes from agricultural pursuits under the AAA, the soil conservation act and plan under which millions of acres of farm lands had been rented to the Federal government and must lie idle with the erroneous view of thereby cutting down production. It is needless to say that Negroes as a rule are not allowed to vote effectively in Mississippi.

Source: "Southerners Protest New Deal Discrimination," *The Negro Star* (Wichita, Kansas), September 11, 1936.