

## THE ELEANOR AND ANNA ROOSEVELT PROGRAM

May 4, 1949 (catalog date)

Description: In this segment, ER discusses the aims and goals of the NAACP with Charles Levy, executive secretary of the New York Branch of the NAACP.

Participants: ER, Charles Levy

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[ER:] Thank you Anna. We have as our guest today Mr. Charles Levy, the Executive Secretary of the New York Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, or NAACP as it is usually called. Mr. Levy won't you tell us what is the NAACP?

[Charles Levy:] Yes Mrs. Roosevelt, thank you. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People is a nonprofit interracial organization which was organized in 1909 in New York City by a handful of white and Negro citizens who became alarmed at the injustices and inequality, and barbarous treatment to which Negroes were subjected in the form of discrimination, segregation, and lynchings. Its purpose is to press for the enactment of legislation that will implement exist-existing laws so that these abuses against fourteen million American citizens cannot be continued.

[ER:] How long have you been connected with the organization Mr. Levy?

[Charles Levy:] My first contact with NAACP was in the little town of Kingfisher, Oklahoma in 1911 when I was quite young. This committee meeting was my first attendance at a public gathering where parliamentary procedure was used. I did not know that in addressing the chair, the term "Mr. President" indicated the presiding officer, rather I thought that it was the man's name. While walking with my aunt a few days later on the street, we came face to face with a presiding officer and I addressed him by saying, "How do you do Mr. President?" Later my aunt told me that the gentleman's name was not "Mr. President" but Mr. Porter, and that he was the president of the local NAACP committee. This happened thirty-eight years ago.

[ER:] [ER laughs] I-I believe the association has grown a good deal since those early days, hasn't it? You must have had many other experiences.

[Charles Levy:] Yes it has Mrs. Roosevelt. From 1909 to the present time, the year in which the association was born, the growth of the NAACP has been progressive until it now has a half million members with branches in forty-five states, the District of Columbia and the territory of Hawaii. Because of the great services of the NAACP renders, new branches are being formed regularly. (2:15)

[ER:] What are the present aims and goals of the NAACP?

[Charles Levy:] The present aims are to stop lynching, to secure a free ballot, to level the ghetto walls, to equalize public education, to halt job discrimination, to abolish Jim Crow travel, to gain justice in the courts, to end discrimination in the armed forces, and to win for all the rights and privileges vouchsafed by the founding fathers as a heritage of all Americans.

[ER:] Well I'd like to ask you something more: do you think that encouraging strides have been made recently towards realizing these aims?

[Charles Levy:] Yes Mrs. Roosevelt, encouraging steps have been made toward the attainment of this goal through the persistent work of the NAACP. Some of them are: winning for nearly a million Negroes the right to vote in the Democratic Primaries in the South for the first time since the Reconstruction period, convincing the Supreme Court of the United States that restrictive covenants are unenforceable, gaining entrance of Negro students into some southern state universities, namely a student in the University of Oklahoma Law School and another in the University of Arkansas Medical School. It has pressed for the Fair Employment Practice Act on a national scale; and has won through its branches a passage of FEPC laws in New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Indiana, Wisconsin and Connecticut. It has won outstanding victories in the defense of Negroes before the United States Supreme Court, and has proved unconstitutional the systematic exclusion of Negroes from juries, confession by torture, and the verdict of a mob-dominated trial. It has pressed for the abolition of Jim Crow in the military service, and it has been instrumental in crystalizing the thinking of high government officials and that from the president down that discriminatory abuses against Negroes are undemocratic and must be eliminated. (4:13)

[ER:] Mr. Levy by what means do you hope to accomplish these goals that you've set?

[Charles Levy:] By working within the framework of our national Constitution and uh for the enactment of the President's civil rights program by the national Congress.

[ER:] Uh what is the greatest need of the NAACP today?

[Charles Levy:] The greatest need of the NAACP is the necessary funds to combat the un-American practices perpetrated against minority groups and especially Negroes. It is dependent upon memberships and donations to continue its work and to counter the efforts of those who spend millions of dollars a year to perpetuate the nefarious practices of segregation, discrimination, and lynching. The memberships are two dollars, three fifty, five, ten and up, with life memberships at five hundred dollars. Those who wish to help the NAACP in this all-out battle, against un-d-democratic practices should send their contributions to the New York branch of the NAACP, Seventh Avenue and 133rd Street, New York City.

[ER:] Of course. As you talked I was thinking that this was going all over the United States and that all over the United States, Americans must want to do away with discrimination. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could get everyone to join the NAACP and pay their dues?

[Charles Levy:] It would certainly be wonderful.

[ER laughing:] And now thank you for being our guest today Mr. Levy. And back to my daughter Anna in Hollywood.

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File(s): 80-5(60)

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