

Negroes Reply To Mayor Loeb

A. Maceo Walker Points Out Need For Job Opportunities for Negroes

A. Maceo Walker, negro, newly appointed member of the Memphis Transit Authority, the Memphis branch of the NAACP, and Lt. George W. Lee have made separate replies to comments of Mayor Loeb at the Rotary Club.

Walker said:

"This is written in haste, since I am hurrying to Nashville in connection with a huge fund-raising campaign for Fisk University. However, when our Mayor publicly blasts the entire negro community, events are approaching a delicate position. There are many of us who are willing to assume any responsibility if we are given the opportunity. Only in recent months have we been permitted such an opportunity. But this is not the problem. The problem goes much deeper than this and I hope I can make it understood.

"The negro race is the only race legally discriminated against with reference to educational opportunities and job opportunities. There isn't a single technical school in Memphis opened to negroes. Yet, we are inviting industries to Memphis. I have been told that the negro population is 37 per cent of the total. Certainly anyone can see that a vast potential is being overlooked in the field of skilled labor in connection with any program of luring industry to our community.

"What of engineering? There are schools of engineering at Tennessee A&I State University and the University of Tennessee. But negroes who graduate in engineering all leave Memphis for employment even though many of them are Memphis students. It is a fearful loss of

manpower to sit by and watch the best quality of our trained young people being siphoned off and forever lost because no one lifts a finger to repair this damage.

"Negroes who graduate in accounting, forestry and mining can expect little or no opportunity for employment by the stores, factories, governmental bodies and other businesses who need technicians in these fields.

"In the field of medicine, negro doctors have decreased in number rather than increased because of no facilities for negro interns, yet Memphis is one of the outstanding medical centers of the nation. This is a sad paradox. Many of these young doctors were born in Memphis, yet live elsewhere because of this lack of intern facilities. In many instances we have sought community responsibility and have been denied. We have begged for a negro member on the board of the Shelby United Neighbors for some time, but the answer has always been no.

"Finally the Universal Life Insurance Co. and the Tri-State Bank of Memphis (I am president of both institutions) have made loans (a combined total) of nearly 30 million dollars over the last several years to homeowners of this city to foster a better and more permanent community."

The school planning laboratory at University of Tennessee, Knoxville, has been given a \$38,500 grant for expanded advisory service for improvement of local school systems throughout the Southeast. The Reginald F. Lewis College of Negro Arts and Sciences, the first of its kind and largest to be awarded to the laboratory. The grant was made by Education Research Laboratories, Inc., New York City, an establishment of Ford Foundation.

Bowles Travels On— U. S. Undersecretary of State Chester Bowles left Nicaragua, en route for New Delhi, India, today after attending a regional conference of American diplomats.

Accepts Dare, Dies— A 22-year-old Akron, Ohio man climbed a utility pole on dare and was electrocuted. He leaped against a wire carrying 4000 volts and was electrocuted. Another wire on the crossarm apparently grounded him.

many of them are... students. It is a fearful loss of community."

Statement of the NAACP

Jesse H. Turner, negro banker and president of Memphis branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, today issued a statement in connection with the Memphis Transit Authority appointment and Mayor Loeb's comments. It was adopted by directors of the Memphis branch. The statement:

"The NAACP has become the vocal center of controversy in the appointment of a negro to MTA.

"A. W. Willis Jr. was denied the post because of his activities with the NAACP. Mr. Willis is a member of the board of directors of the NAACP and has served on the Legal Redress Committee. Since 1953 he has been one of the legal counsels of the Memphis branch, and for the last five years has served as chairman of the Life Membership Committee. Mr. Willis himself is a life member.

"A. M. Walker was apparently given the post because of his supposedly being less active with the association. It should be noted, however, that both men are staunch fighters for the negro's rights as a first-class citizen. To appoint a negro who would truly represent the thinking of the negro community he would either have to be a member of the NAACP or espouse the policies of the organization.

"Mr. Walker, in addition to being a life member of the NAACP, served as co-chairman of our 1961 membership campaign; he is a member of Tennessee Committee of Federal Civil Rights Commission; he was a member of the committee which succeeded in securing negro students to break the color barrier at Memphis State University; and he has participated in our current sit-in demonstrations to seek jobs for negroes as clerks and sales personnel in Main Street stores.

"The NAACP is precluded by its constitution from endorsing candidates for public office; consequently, no preference is given between Messrs. Willis and Walker. We do, however,

strongly protest the action of Mayor Loeb and, to a lesser extent, our city commissioners for their rejection of Mr. Willis solely because of his activities with the NAACP, which is dedicated, working within our Anglo-Saxon legal heritage, to completely eradicate racial discrimination from this country.

"Even tho Mr. Walker, an eminently qualified negro, was subsequently appointed to the MTA, our city has suffered immeasurably from the damage caused by the tactics of our Mayor Henry Loeb, who, like Orval Faubus of Arkansas and Adolph Hitler of Germany, never hesitates to use the race issue as a means of inflaming various segments of our community for personal political power.

"It is ironic that Mayor Loeb, a Jew, would deliberately promote racial hate when today, in Israel, Adolph Eichmann is being tried for the murder of millions of Jews for no other reason than their being Jews."

"We of the NAACP are proud of our long line of successes against racial bigotry in this nation and city. We are also happy that, thru our efforts, America has become less fertile for the spread of world Communism, which thrives on ignorance, godlessness, racial hatred, racial superiority, selfishness and concentration of power. The NAACP will continue its fight against racial barriers within our city; so that all of our public officials and businessmen will be freed from the bondage of racial prejudice which prevents their utilizing the vast negro manpower existing in our city."

Lt. Lee's Remarks

Lt. George W. Lee, negro Republican leader, co-chairman with Walker of the Volunteer Citizens Association, a biracial negro political organization, negro

functional illiteracy. Night schools were set up to teach hundreds of the members of the race to read and write. The inspiration of this movement had much to do with launching Memphis as the country's leading city in the fight to wipe out functional illiteracy.

Loeb Fails in Case

"The cases listed here are just a few from the record, and if the character of the witnesses I have paraded are to determine the accuracy of Mr. Loeb's statement, he has failed to make out his case and on the record presented. I believe any fair-minded white person will say that negro leaders stand not only acquitted of the indictment of failure to assume their responsibility, but as having established in addition the positive fact of their usefulness to the community.

"It is our earnest hope that our Mayor, who says he is the Mayor of all the people, will exert a more wholesome and hearty influence in these days when some very good and sincere white people are genuinely distressed."

and Walker. We do, however, live in our city."

Lt. Lee's Remarks

Lt. George W. Lee, negro Republican leader, co-chairman with Walker of the Volunteer Citizens Association, bipartisan negro political organization, negro Elks leader and insurance man, replied to Loeb's Rotary speech in a talk to the Memphis Underwriters Club last night. Lee said:

"Mayor Henry Loeb in a speech before Memphis Rotary Club Tuesday, charged that negro leaders had failed to assume their responsibility to the city as a whole. Let us look at the record. In 1876, when the negro was but seven years out of slavery, yellow fever brought misery and death to Memphis. The population of the city was reduced from 40,000 to 20,000. White people fled the plague-stricken city, which was left almost entirely in the hands of negroes, who guarded the homes and the business places until the passing of the fever. Gen. Luke E. Wright, prominent Memphian who later became Secretary of War under President Theodore Roosevelt, praised the conduct of negro leadership.

"In 1881, it became necessary to float a large issue of compromise bonds in order to rehabilitate the city's shattered finances. It was found that in order to interest Eastern capital, it would be necessary for some citizen of Memphis to buy a portion of the securities. Robert Church Sr., a negro leader, was approached by such men as the late Napoleon Hill and Dr. D. T. Porter. The negro leader promptly put up a thousand dollars for the purchase of the first bond. Yet, Mayor Loeb says the negro leader has failed to assume his responsibilities.

Cites W. C. Handy

"Let us continue with the record. W. C. Handy, the Father of the Blues, lived in Memphis. It was on Beale Street that he wrote the Memphis Blues, the St. Louis Blues and other immortal songs. He

made what many critics proclaim the greatest contribution to American music. Upon his genius, Memphis was lifted to the notice of the world...

"If Mr. Loeb needs more to neutralize his conviction that the negro has made no positive contribution to the city as a whole, let us look to the Tom Lee incident, where 30 white people were saved from the swirling vortex of that treacherous whirlpool around Cohamo Landing. The good white people of Memphis built a monument to him. It stands on the point where Beale Street bathes its feet in the muddy waters of Old Man River...

Dr. J. E. Walker

"One of the outstanding contributors to Memphis business was the late Dr. J. E. Walker. He founded the Universal Life Insurance Co., that has loaned \$20 million to build homes in Memphis. He co-founded the Tri-State Bank that has loaned in excess of \$5 million to build homes in Memphis...

"If Mr. Loeb looks at this record, I imagine he will be willing to admit that he was a little hasty in his indictment of the Memphis negro.

"During the war emergency, the Memphis negroes oversubscribed their war loan quotas in an unprecedented upsurge of civic spirit and patriotic resolutions...

"The picture of blind Matthew Thornton struggling day and night to raise funds for St. Jude Hospital is filled with tragic grandeur and impassioned beauty.

"Memphis negro leaders launched the first educational program in America to wipe out

3. 1961

estab-
Laboratory, Inc., New York
made by Education Facili-
the laboratory. The award
and largest to be awarded
Grant is the first of its
ity announced. The renew-
out the Southeast, the uni-
of local school systems
y service for improve-
00 grant for expanded ad-
ville, has been given
at University of Tennessee
a school planning labora-
\$38,500 Grant—
nats.
conference of American
oday after attending a re-
by air for New Delhi, In-
er Bowles left Nicosia, Cy-
Undersecretary of State
es Travels On—
ntly grounded him.
r wire on the crossarm
its and was electrocuted.
against a wire carrying
nd was electrocuted. He
mbed a utility pole on a
-year-old Akron, Ohio,
ts Dare, Dies—
of
five
hill-
ad-
ing
th,
m-
es,

\$25.00
35.90
53.45

\$ 500.00
1008.00