

W.E.B. Du Bois Club after the Fall

Arthur Myatt

1966

James Peake, director of Du Bois Clubs (DBC) national publications, who lives in San Francisco, stated on March 11 that he knew of 2000 new memberships since the terrorist attacks. Of these, 700 are in the San Francisco Bay area. There is no way of estimating at this time how many more new members there are across the nation of which the national office had not then been notified. Except that a substantial number of people in other groups on the left have, like Staughton Lynd, joined as a protest against the recent attacks, it is not known just what these memberships signify. Only one thing can be said with certainty: this reaction is not what Attorney General Katzenbach wanted.

There has also been response from other national groups which is encouraging to those who would not see the peace movement or the civil rights movement divided and crippled by the government. The American Civil Liberties Union has protested to Katzenbach, and they have offered legal assistance to the DBC. In Atlanta, the national office of the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee issued a statement condemning the Justice Department. They suggest the Administration is out to destroy any organization which challenges its policies rather than treating these organizations democratically. Paul Booth, national secretary of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), has announced a fund drive to rebuild the DBC headquarters in San Francisco. The SDS regional office in San Francisco has offered temporary space in its own building to the bombed-out DBC. There is more of the same sort of thing from too many groups across the country—the National Council for a Sane Nuclear Policy, the Communist Party, the Student Peace Union, and more, and more—to detail in this article. In general, the response indicates it is too soon, or perhaps too late, for the McCarthy tactics of intimidation to work again.

Locally, membership in the Detroit chapter of the DBC has more than doubled; just how much more will not be clear until people stop signing up. There are chapters a few days old in Ann Arbor and in Lansing. The Wayne State University Daily Collegian editorial for March 10 was headed, "Ignore Threats Support Du " and warned the 'university against the expected pressure to withdraw official recognition from the DBC on campus. The same day, the Daily Collegian also printed a statement in protest of the Justice Department's action, which was signed by twenty-seven faculty members. Hugh Fowler, DBC national chairman who came to Detroit Friday the 11th, spoke to a friendly audience of approximately 100 people in Lansing that night. On Saturday morning, he had a press conference at the Wayne State U. campus which he termed "Successful." Plans are that he will speak in Ann Arbor and in Detroit soon.

There were twenty nine people at a short demonstration in Saturday afternoon's drizzle, protesting the McCarran Act in front of Detroit's Federal Building. Breakthrough, the right-wing group, was there as usual to take pictures and to shout their present slogan, "Remember—treason will bring you death!"

Their threats, and the expected phone calls to DBC members in the middle of the night have been the only overt harassment in Detroit so far this issue.

For those who are interested in joining the Du Bois Clubs, membership cards are available at the office of the Detroit Committee to End the War in Viet Nam, 1101 West Warren.

fifth Estate

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