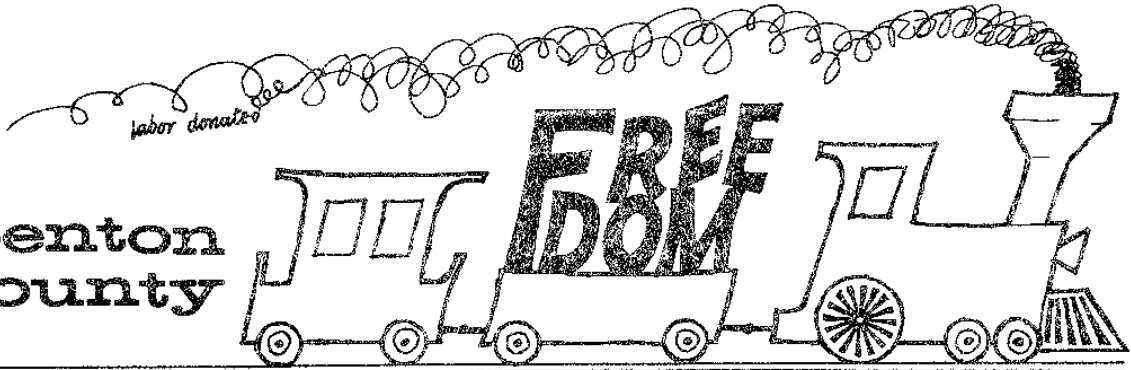


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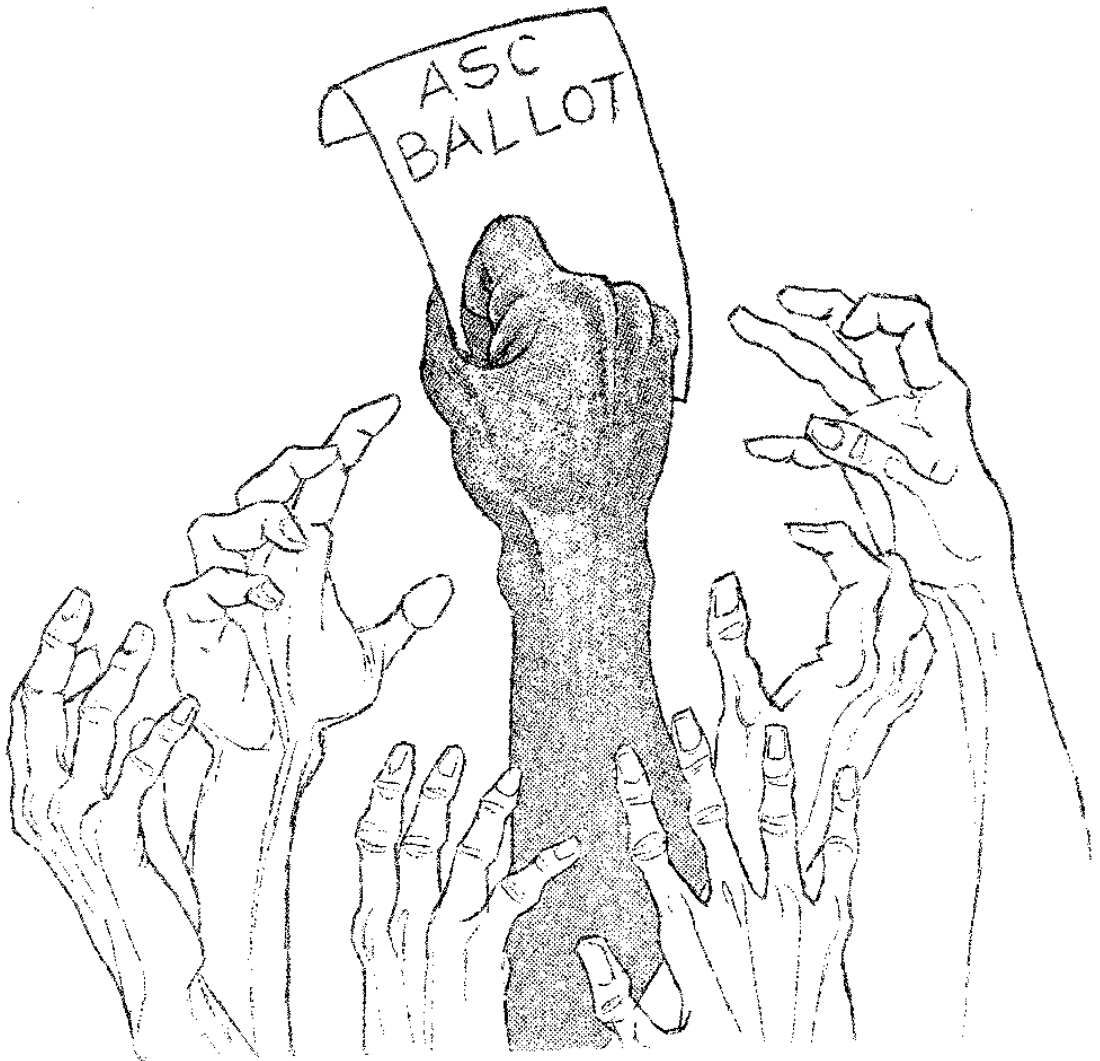


"It's that Freedom Train a comin'; get on board, get on board."

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Beulah Mae Ayers,
Editor



From the Negro Poets:

What Color Are You?

by Dr. Juanita Strawn

The Crises of our time are worrying me--
 Color me chicken;
 The world is changing much too fast--
 Color me scared;
 Things that secured me once before,
 Must be eliminated by the score,
 What used to be just ain't no more--
 Color me confused!

Changes are made before my eyes--
 Color me blind;
 Opportunity keeps knocking at my door--
 Color me deaf;
 Lessons I've learned yesterday
 Must pay off, I've heard them say;
 I will not change, I'll have my way,
 Color me static.

I have a degree, I know it all--
 Color me ignorant;
 I know I'm right, all others wrong--
 Color me intolerable;
 If my way they cannot see
 Lord, have mercy on them, not me,
 They're hopeless in face of prosperity--
 Color me bigoted.

I am strong and mighty in the face of change--
 Color me confident;
 I can face the future, whatever it brings--
 Color me flexible;
 What I've learned each day in school,
 Provides the background and the tool,
 Help me practice the Golden Rule--
 Color me educated!

I've learned tolerance for those who differ--
 Color me true;
 I will carry my share without the laurels--
 Color me responsible;
 If some falter because of quirks,
 Though they say I'm just a jerk--
 Color me loyal.

My head is high, my voice is sure--
 Color me independent;
 When I don't have I'll just make do--
 Color me creative;
 A man without knowledge, I have read,
 May well be compared to one that is dead, it bursts apart.
 You can count on me, I'm unafraid--
 Color me alive!

DEMOCRACY

by Langston Hughes

Democracy will not come
 Today, this year
 Nor ever
 Through compromise and fear.

I have as much right
 As the other fellow has
 To stand
 On my own two feet
 And own the land.

I tire so of hearing people
 Say:
Let things take their course
Tomorrow is another day.
 I don't need my freedom
 When I'm dead.
 I cannot live on
 Tomorrow's bread.

Freedom
 Is a strong seed
 Planted
 In a great need.
 I live here, too.
 I want freedom
 Just as you.

JIM CROW CAR

BY Langston Hughes

Get out the lunch-box
 of your dreams
 And bite into the sandwich
 of your heart,
 And ride the Jim Crow car
 until it screams
 And like an atom bomb,
 it bursts apart.

Negro History Section

THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

Suppose that you had been born a slave, and you had been sold away from your mother and father. They too had been separated from each other, so that you were in one place, your mother in another, and your father in still another place.

When you had become "grown", your master decided that it was time for you to marry. He selected some other slave for you to marry. When children came he let you rear them until they were old enough to work, perhaps he then sold them to some other plantation miles away from you. Your love for them, or the great need they had of your care and protection was, in many cases of no concern to the master.

Could you ever be happy under such a system? Small wonder then that thousands of slaves attempted to run away from the horrors of slavery, and to gain freedom in the North or in Canada.

Canada was a safer place than the North. This was because Canada was not affected by our laws, and, consequently, a slave who arrived there could not be brought back to his master. But in the North it was different. Laws were passed which gave slave owners the right to go into northern states and seize any escaped slaves, and return with them to their plantations.

Out of such conditions developed the Underground Railroad. The Underground Railroad was not a railway system--there were no steel tracks, locomotives, or day coaches. The railroad was made up of men and women. These were called the Abolitionists. They were so thoroughly opposed to slavery that they gladly gave of their means, their energies, and even their lives to help runaway slaves.

The system was known as the "Underground" because it became necessary to carry out all of its movements in secret. It became very dangerous to help a slave. Heavy fines, long terms of prison, beatings, and even lynchings were the results of discovery in any attempt to aid a slave.

Nevertheless, in spite of the difficulties encountered, over 20,000 slaves achieved freedom in the North or in Canada as a result of the Underground Railroad. Its methods were very much like a railway system. It had its officers, conductors, train dispatchers, freight handlers, and even stations and hotels. But always under cover.

Suppose you were a slave in Virginia, near Richmond. You knew that if you could get to Philadelphia you could free yourself of the awful shackles which bound you to serfdom. Here is the way you might have gained your freedom: First of all you would find out whether there was any representative of the Underground Railroad in your neighborhood. Very likely there would be. Once you had found him, you would tell him that you wanted to get to Philadelphia.

The representative of the Underground would get in touch with one of the conductors, who, in turn, would communicate with another representative in a center like Richmond. This representative would communicate with a center further north. Thus the plan would be relayed from point to point until the chain was completed up to Philadelphia.