

OTHER EDITORS SAY--

SHOWMAN SLAMS NAACP

(By George Whittington)

The first interest being served at Poplarville is that of communism, a Negro comedian whose name became a byword 30 years ago declared here Thursday.

Stepin Fetchit, who parlayed a shuffling gait and a lazy whine into a million dollars and a name synonymous with laziness, made that declaration, adding that in any such situation, "Communist participation, Communist interest, and Communist interference might be found."

Fetchit stopped in Jackson today on his way to the gulf coast, on a booking tour for "Little Richard", noted pop-singing Negro evangelist. He went to the office of the State Sovereignty Commission, where he met the press, voluntarily lumping a barrage at both the Poplarville mob and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

Fetchit—real name Lincoln Theodore Monroe Andrew Perry in honor of four U.S. Presidents—made his observations in commenting on the mob kidnaping of Negro M. C. Parker in Poplarville.

He said he sees Communist influence within the NAACP, even if the Communists don't dominate the organization—and he issued a warning to all Negroes against those who would pretend to serve their purposes through force.

"You can't destroy the rights of one person or one race without endangering the rights of all," Perry asserted. "You can't give power to one big group without having

the ever-present danger of that group to use its rights against you," he said.

He added that he is flatly opposed to the program of the NAACP in the South, "although I once gave benefits in its behalf."

He said that since the time he worked in behalf of the then-fledgling organization, he is convinced its aims have changed. "I knew Walter White personally," he said, "and I don't think the NAACP today is what he wanted it to be."

As for the possible use of the NAACP by the Communists in furthering its own program, Fetchit declared, "The Communists use the organization—anybody. I've seen the influence even in the pulpit."

"And if they're using the NAACP, you can only say that the people in that organization are human."

But, he went on, he doesn't think the current program of the organization—whether Communist-inspired or not—is the right program for the South. "You can't force integration," he said. "If it came as a natural order, that would be right."

Fetchit denied sharply that his characterization of the Negro ever belittled his fellow man.

"I think I was admired by everybody, Negro and white, for what I

was," he said. "I was a human being with a talent, and respected as such. I don't think I ever became famous in movies, littled the Negro race."

"On the other hand, as the first I think I helped to lift the Negro a little higher than he was."

Fetchit said he hasn't appeared in a movie since 1950, when he made "Bend of the River" with James Stewart. And he only made that, he said, because Hollywood had begun to pick up untalented actors and casting them as Stepin Fetchit types.

He said he resented the casting of such types as much as did the NAACP in denouncing the type as such.

And just to prove that the old Stepin Fetchit isn't dead—in spite of his soon-to-be 66 years—Fetchit donned his rubber baldy cap, to make him appear bald, put on a floppy, moth-eaten felt hat, and went into a comedy routine.

It doubled his small audience with laughter.

"Laughter," he observed as it ended, "still is one of the best tonics in the world. And a humorist is the greatest ambassador any race or nation can claim."

—Jackson State Times

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