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William Edward Burghardt DuBois, founder of the NAACP and editor of *The Crisis* from 1910-1934.

leaders spread the word by writing and speaking. They wrote for the Black press and specialized Black journals like the NAACP's *Crisis*. NAACP leaders were also eloquent speakers who traveled from city to city spreading the civil rights gospel.

The anti-lynching struggle preoccupied Walter White and consumed much of his energies from the moment he was given his first assignment with the NAACP as an investigator who would utilize his pass-for-White complexion to gather facts on lynching. This struggle against the "Rope and Faggot," as White titled one of his books on the subject, was an obvious life and death one. Another equally obvious one was the struggle to place bread on the table.

In this regard, Roy Wilkins, who joined the staff in 1931 as assistant secretary, provided an important service when he and writer George Schuyler risked death to investigate and report on the abominable conditions under which Blacks had to work on the Mississippi Flood Control Project.

As the New Deal programs were established, the NAACP's national office and branches lobbied fiercely against racial discrimination in the Public Works Administration, the Civilian Conservation Corps, the National Youth Administration and the Social Security Administration. Guided by the national office, the branches became the local eyes

and ears on the lookout for racial bias in regional and local federal offices.

Through the support of Eleanor Roosevelt, who was a member of the NAACP National Board of Directors, Walter White had an open channel to the Roosevelt Administration, especially to the President. Because her husband's initial sympathy for the plight of Blacks was not so great as that of her own, the First Lady's help had its limits. Since urgent action was needed, the NAACP joined with A. Philip Randolph in calling for a March on Washington. To stave off this threat, President Roosevelt, on June 25, 1941, issued his famous Executive Order 8802 creating the Fair Employment Practice Committee and barring discrimination on federal contracts.

On the legal front, the Association began laying the foundation in 1930 for a revolution in constitutional law that would impact upon every American even though the thrust of the strategy was on gaining equal protection for Blacks. From 1911 through 1928, the Association's guiding legal force was Moorfield Storey, an expert in constitutional law and the Association's president. By 1930, however, it was clear that the Association needed not only a comprehensive legal strategy but also a legal department.

In 1930, the American Fund for Public Service, commonly known as the

Garland Fund, approved a grant of \$100,000 for the NAACP. The money was slated for taxpayer suits against dual school systems in the South, legal protection for the civil liberties of Blacks as well as to wage a legal fight against the exclusion of Blacks from juries. The funds were also to enable the NAACP to attack imperialism in such countries as Haiti and Nicaragua.

All-Out Attack Launched

INEVITABLY, however, the immediate focus was on the whole question of segregation. As a beginning, the initial and only installment of the grant was used to finance a comprehensive study on civil rights case law by Nathan Margold, a Harvard scholar. He prepared a "Preliminary Report for the Joint Committee Supervising the Expenditure of the 1930 Appropriation by the American Fund for Public Service to the NAACP." After Margold completed his report in 1933, strategy and tactics became overriding concerns for the Association.

To head the Association's new legal

program, White, in 1934, selected Charles Houston, the leader of a cadre of brilliant Black lawyers. He took full control of this position the following year. Houston had developed a reputation as a scholar and perfectionist in his work to revamp the Howard University Law School and make it second to none, whether White or Black. A genius, he used the foundation that Margold had provided in his study to lay out the basic framework for the NAACP strategy that would ultimately lead to the landmark ruling by the Supreme Court in *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954. That ruling overturned the "separate but equal doctrine" under which Blacks had lived since the *Plessy v. Ferguson* judgment in 1896. The full strategy for *Brown*, which was based in large part on the sociology of law, was developed and implemented by Houston's protege, Thurgood Marshall, who succeeded the older man as NAACP Special Counsel.

In this campaign to break the shackles of the caste system which had constitutional sanction, Americans also owe debts to numerous other Black lawyers, notably William Hastie, Robert Carter, Spottswood Robinson, Leon Ranson and Edward Lovett.

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