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NEWS RELEASE from

COUNCIL ON AFRICAN AFFAIRS, Inc.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AUGUST 25, 1950

STATE DEPARTMENT CANCELLATION OF ROBESON'S PASSPORT CHALLENGED

Representatives of the Passport Division of the State Department have told Paul Robeson, whose passport was revoked August 4 on the eve of his departure for meetings and concerts abroad, that Mr. Robeson's condemnation of the treatment of American Negroes should be confined to the American scene as this was a "family affair" and should not be aired abroad.

This was one of the highlights of the 2-hour discussion which took place in Washington at the Passport Division office on August 23 at a conference held at the request of Mr. Robeson's counsel to find out the basis for the State Department's arbitrary action.

Participating in the conference with Paul Robeson were his attorney, Nathan Witt, Judge James A. Cobb, formerly on the Municipal Court bench of Washington, D. C., Dean George Parker of the Terrell Law School, Attorney George Hayes, member of Washington, D.C. School Board, and William L. Patterson, Executive Secretary of the Civil Rights Congress. Representing the Passport Division were H.A. Nicholas and Willis K. Young.

Nathan Witt accused the Department of arbitrarily violating the privileges, immunities, and rights of Paul Robeson in the revocation of his passport. He asked the Department for a definitive statement of the reasons for its action, which it had based simply on the assertion that Robeson's travel abroad would be "detrimental to the interests of the United States Government".

The State Department spokesman intimated that unless Robeson would agree to refrain from criticizing the treatment of Negro Americans and the American government's foreign policy during his travels abroad, the State Department would stand pat on its cancellation of his passport. Mr. Nicholas asked for a statement that Mr. Robeson would not speak if he went abroad.

Paul Robeson expressed his deep and abiding loyalty to America, his country, and also his intention to continue to criticize those acts emanating from foreign and domestic policy which in any way curtailed the constitutional rights of the American people generally, or specifically violated the constitutional liberties and human rights of the Negro people. He contended that this was in keeping with his duty as a loyal American citizen and consistent with his constitutional rights.

He was supported in this stand by Judge Cobb, who said that the curtailment of freedom of travel was an arbitrary exercise of power by the State Department in violation of the fifth Amendment protecting property rights.

Attorney Hayes added that he regarded this matter as further attack upon the rights and privileges of 15 million Negroes who were already denied their citizenship rights without effort on the part of the Government to protect same.

The conference ended with the State Department refusing to reconsider its action unless Mr. Robeson would sign a statement that he would not speak if he went abroad. The attorneys present with Mr. Robeson in the conference unanimously declared that this matter was of such fundamental character that it must be taken immediately to the U.S. Supreme Court.

The Council on African Affairs, of which Mr. Robeson is Chairman, has received copies of numerous letters and cables from individuals and organizations in the U.S. and abroad protesting the cancellation of Robeson's passport. The Secretary of the Council, Dean Acheson, is protesting the cancellation of Robeson's passport.

B 1 B 6/3

(59) 163Z

EXTRACT.

ct for File No.: P.F. 44,990 / ~~Ref 513~~ Name: ROBESON.
 iginal in File No.: S.F. 411/South Africa V.10. Serial: 458c Receipt Date: 6.9.50.
 Origin from: Telecheck Under Ref: Dated: 5.9.50.
 Extracted on: 6.3.51. by: DD. Section: R4.

Copy of Telecheck on Temple Bar 2151, C.P.H.W.
 Incoming. 5.9.50.

Prop. Dept., London District, obtains some addresses from Maud (ROGERSON).

Paul ROBESON, c/o the Council for African Affairs, 23, West 26th Street,
 New York, 10.

Gabbiel d'ARBOUSSIER, Maud tells her to ask the British Peace Cttee or write
 to him care of the French Party, or the Chamber of
 Nationalities, she thinks ~~it~~ it is called.

AZIKIWE, Post Office Box 573, Lagos, Nigeria, British West Africa.

Sam KAHN. Maud has no address for him and does not know how they
 could get into communication with him. The official
 addresses they have are no longer any use. The places
 are all closed.

Mrs. RENNER (sp) Maud asks if that is Mrs. ~~Mantole~~ RENNER. Caller says
 she is the one from the Gold Coast or West Coast of Africa.
 Maud says it is c/o Accra Evening News, PO Box 821,
 Accra, Gold Coast.

P.T.O.

[Handwritten signature and date] 16.3.51

Caller asks if there is no way of getting in touch with KENN via the Guardian. They are holding a meeting on Sept. 21st on Africa and the fight for peace, and they want messages.

Maud says to leave it to her for a couple of days. She does not like to suspect anything that would cost the Guardian in any way, but she will ask the South African comrades. One of them is due in tomorrow morning. She will find out if anyone has a private address for him.

NEW YORK
AUG 16
9 PM
MADISON ST



AIR MAIL

Mr. Know
EMK.

Mr. Desmond Buckle
37 Charlwood Street
London, S.W. 1,
England

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