

Negro, White Vets Act for Nat'l Organization

By CLAUDIA JONES

CHICAGO, April 7. — Over 400 Negro and white veterans from 20 states met in Du Sable High School today to form a national organization of veterans of World War II.

Among their number was a delegation from Columbia City, Tenn., headed by James Stephenson, young Negro veteran, whose defense of his mother had started off the official lynch terror against Negro citizens in Tennessee. Seated among the New Yorkers was Richard Ferguson from Freeport, L. I., whose brothers were killed by Jimcrow-minded cop.

The entire audience stood briefly in tribute to Pvt. L. C. Herman of El Campo, Tex., who on the Army Day, was scheduled to be electrocuted by the state of Texas on the charge of allegedly "assaulting" an elderly white woman.

Delegates listened intently to the keynote address of Bertram S. Alves, national organizer for the Provisional Committee for a national Negro veterans organization.

"We fought to defeat the evils of Fascism but at the same time we kept an active eye on the America

we would return to some day," he told the vets.

"But what have we returned to? We've returned to have our hopes dashed, our dreams shattered, our yearnings for equality and full freedom unsatisfied. We've returned to a land where second class citizenship is still our lot. Where the poll taxers and the unreconstructed rebels still rule the South. Where Bilbo, Eastland and Rankin preach the mad doctrine of white supremacy in the halls of Congress.

"We've returned to find greedy forces in America launching a full scale offensive to undermine the trade unions and living standards of the people."

Stressing the connection between the attacks on labor and the Negro people, Alves told the delegates that "labor and the Negro people have a common enemy" and that they must "unite in common struggle to defeat the concerted drive of Big Business and its government tools to shackle the American people with fascist dictatorship."

Also scored was Winston Churchill's Anglo-American military al-

liance and "supremacy of the English speaking peoples" against the colonial and liberty loving peoples of the earth. Taking stand for Big Three unity as the key to reach, Alves continued:

"We did not return to be embroiled in another conflict to bolster up the enslavement of our brothers overseas by British, Dutch, American or any other imperialism, particularly we do not support a war against our great war ally, the Soviet Union, the country that bore the brunt of the fascist attacks, the only country where racial and national discrimination has been abolished."

Outlining the reasons for the formation of a national veterans organization, Alves stated that while it would be interracial, it would be primarily geared to serve Negro veterans. Already, he told the delegates, Negro vets are "organized by the thousands in state, city, church and social groups." Typical of these is the newly formed Alabama veterans organization, whose president Kenneth Kennedy is active on the conference floor. The

Georgia Veteran League, the 92nd Division's Veterans Association are also represented here.

Alves evoked the delegates to "unite in one great phalanx that can speak out nationally and get the ear of all right thinking Americans."

Greetings were received by the conference from Harold L. Iickes, Mary McLeod Bethune, Henry A. Wallace, university president F. D. Patterson, of Tuskegee, A. W. Dent of Dillard U., labor leaders like Saul Mills, Raymond Tilman, New Orleans Transport Workers Union, and Herbert March, of the Packinghouse Union, councilman Benjamin J. Davis, Rev. W. H. Jernagin of the Federal Council of Churches, Rep. Vito Marcantonio and Rep. Hugh DeLacy.

Even the housing problem was solved with the aid of the local Red Cross, which had over 400 cots and 800 blankets sent by truck from St. Louis to accommodate these staunch veterans.

It's a single minded purpose that motivates them all right; that purpose is peace, security and equality.