



Smithsonian Institution

National Museum of African American History and Culture

Pamphlet: The Jobless Negro

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while, then cut him off and ordered him to the municipal lodging house.

And then at last something new happened! Norman Smith and his wife heard of the Unemployed Council! They went to the Council's headquarters and told them they were denied relief and had been evicted again. The Council got the whole neighborhood aroused about it. Negro workers, white workers, men and women, all together, they came out and moved the family into the apartment.

It was only a few days afterwards that Estelle Smith gave birth to another child.

The Unemployed Council sent a delegation to the Charity Organization office and forced them to give relief. The charity people had said before that they couldn't, but they did it now! They gave out \$5 at once for food—with a crowd of Negro worker and white workers standing in front of the office with determination all over their faces—and they got a letter to the Emergency Work Bureau that got them work for three days a week for the whole winter.

In April, 1932, they moved back to Harlem. A week later Smith was laid off his charity job. The Charity Society at Lenox Avenue refused any aid—until a new delegation arrived from the Unemployed Council.

By October Mrs. Smith was in the hospital with her fourth child, having eaten almost nothing but cabbage and beans during her pregnancy. She was treated miserably in the Harlem Hospital. On November 16 she died.

Six Negro and white workers stood about the coffin of Estelle Smith, only 27 years old, wife and mother of four

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small children. They stood there with fists clenched, and the workers vowed to avenge her death.

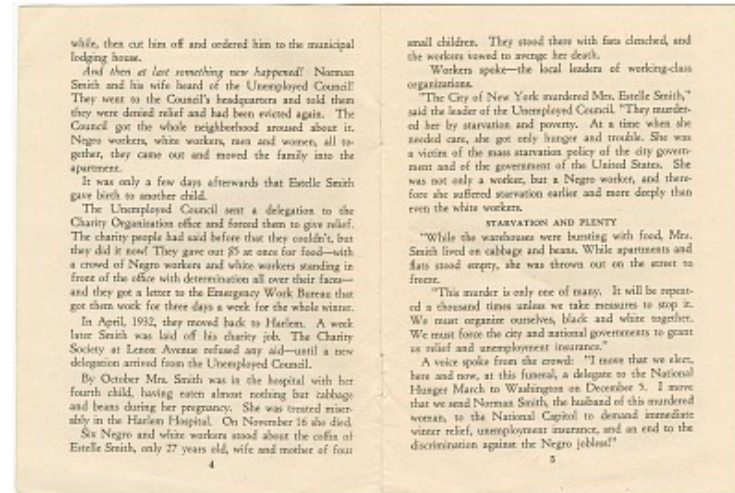
Workers spoke—the local leaders of working-class organizations.

"The City of New York murdered Mrs. Estelle Smith," said the leader of the Unemployed Council. "They murdered her by starvation and poverty. At a time when she needed care, she got only hunger and trouble. She was a victim of the mass starvation policy of the city government and of the government of the United States. She was not only a worker, but a Negro worker, and therefore she suffered starvation earlier and more deeply than even the white workers.

STARVATION AND PLENTY

"While the warehouses were bursting with food, Mrs. Smith lived on cabbage and beans. While apartments and flats stood empty, she was thrown out on the street to freeze.

"This murder is only one of many. It will be repeated a thousand times



unless we take measures to stop it. We must organize ourselves, black and white together. We must force the city and national governments to grant us relief and unemployment insurance."

A voice spoke from the crowd: "I move that we elect, here and now, at this funeral, a delegate to the National Hunger March to Washington on December 5. I move that we send Norman Smith, the husband of this murdered woman, to the National Capitol to demand immediate winter relief, unemployment insurance, and an end to the discrimination against the Negro jobless!"

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