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National Museum of African American History and Culture

Pamphlet: This Is My Husband: Fighter for His People, Political Refugee

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The Baltimore Afro-American, commenting on the harassment of our family, had this to say in its February 23, 1952, issue:..."More than a month ago, Harry T. Moore, and his wife were murdered by foul bomb assassins in Mims, Florida. The FBI went through the motions of 'investigating' but no arrests have been made. It looks like some of those FBI boys frittering away their time trailing innocent four-year old children down the streets of Brooklyn could be more profitably employed tracking down bomb-throwing killers in the everglades of Florida."

Yet today the surveillance continues. Even as I write this my hand shakes with hatred for these cruel and vicious manhunters of the true leaders and heroes of the people. Through the window of my apartment I have seen them sitting in their cars, glaring searchingly at every passer-by and waiting impassively to trail me to work, to the park, to school with our daughters. When they sit there no one speaks to them. Even the children of the neighborhood cut off their laughter and shroud their small faces in grim expressions of scorn when they pass by them. Oh yes! The celebrated FBI "laws" know they are in enemy territory here. They are sealed off from all the "tongues" in the community by an unbreachable wall of hatred which is the historic fate of the persecutors of the just.

In his hometown, too, where my husband's family is under constant surveillance, these FBI hunters are scorned. Especially is this true in the community around his father's drug store. These people were his friends and neighbors in that ghetto with its awful poverty, its hardworking men and women-happy hunting ground for police gunmen, rent-gougers, loan sharks.

There, upstairs above the store, my husband was born. From the age of 6 to his 23rd birthday, he often worked there with his father. The people and the life of that community were his first teachers, and I believe that some day men will write that he in turn was one of their greatest teachers. My husband dearly loved the working people of that neighborhood. It was the soul-killing drudgery of their toil and sufferings, yet ever-hopeful spirit and striving for better things, that inspired him to write, to speak, to join in and to lead struggles in their behalf.

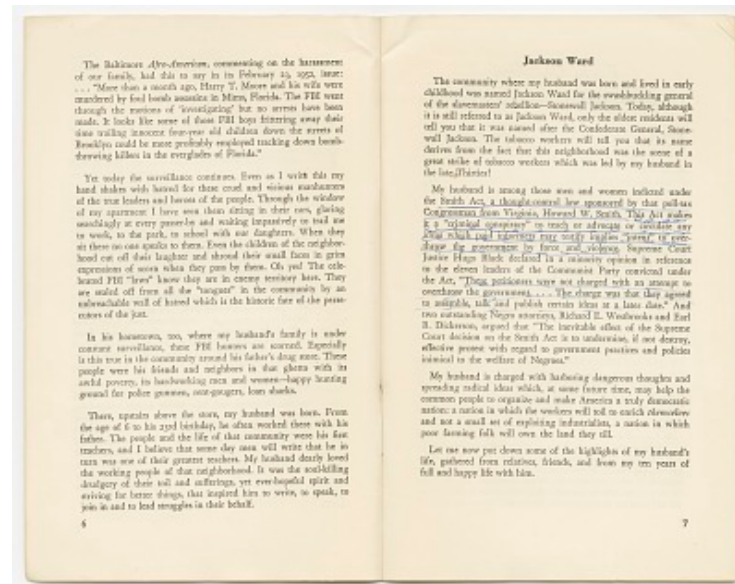
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Jackson Ward

The community where my husband was born and lived in early childhood was named Jackson Ward for the swashbuckling general of the slavemasters' rebellion - Stonewall Jackson. Today, although it is still referred to as Jackson Ward, only the oldest residents will tell you that it was named after the Confederate General, Stonewall Jackson. The tobacco workers will tell you that its name derives from the fact that this neighborhood was the scene of a great strike of tobacco workers which was led by my husband in the late Thirties!

[[the underlining in the following paragraph was added by hand, and is not part of the original text]]



My husband is among those men and women indicted under the Smith Act, a thought-control law sponsored by that poll-tax Congressman from Virginia, Howard W. Smith. This Act makes it a "criminal conspiracy" to teach or advocate or circulate any ideas which paid informers may testify implies "intent" to overthrow the government by force and violence. Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black declared in a minority opinion in reference to the eleven leaders of the Communist Party convicted under the Act, "These petitioners were not charged with an attempt to overthrow the government.... The charge was that they agreed to assemble, talk and publish certain ideas at a later date." And two outstanding Negro attorneys, Richard E. Westbrooks and Earl B. Dickerson, argued that "The inevitable effect of the Supreme Court decision on the Smith Act is to undermine, if not destroy, effective protest with regard to government practices and policies inimical to the welfare of Negroes."

My husband is charged with harboring dangerous thoughts and spreading radical ideas which, at some future time, may help the common people to organize and make America a truly democratic nation: a nation in which the workers will toil to enrich themselves and not a small set of exploiting industrialists, a nation in which poor farming folk will own the land they till.

Let me now put down some of the highlights of my husband's life, gathered from relatives, friends, and from my ten years of full and happy life with him.



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