

THE MAY DAY TRADITION

MAY DAY, as our news columns indicate, was celebrated in a multitude of ways throughout the world. The overriding issues, however, were the demand for peace, an end to atomic tests and weapons, an end to segregation and discrimination, and for economic security.

These were the keynotes of the overflow Central Plaza meeting in New York Wednesday night, which heard speakers of diverse outlooks. Whatever differences there were—and there were clearly many—there was agreement that socialist-minded Americans should support the struggles of the Negro people for civil rights. Conrad Lynn, a leading Negro civil rights attorney, was strongly applauded in his call for support of the historic Pilgrimage of Prayer in Washington May 17.

Similar support was expressed to the sentiments of the great Negro historian, Dr. W. E. B. DuBois; the pacifist leader, Rev. A. J. Muste, and the Communist spokesman, George Blake Charney.

From this meeting and a number of others around the country, it is clear that class-conscious workers want—and will find ways—to express themselves. Commercial newspapers are congratulating themselves prematurely with the claim that great May Day demonstrations are ended because there was no Union Square gathering Wednesday. From the spirit at the Central Plaza meeting and from others there is the promise of greater May Days to come.

The Central Plaza meeting was a distinct step forward in the context of these times. Some important currents were brought together when Dr. DuBois, Rev. Muste, attorney Lynn and Communist leader Charney spoke together. These have meaning today and will have more tomorrow.

But it would be smug to consider that this is all there is to the situation. May Day arose out of American labor's great struggles in the 1880s for the eight-hour day. It will have a deeper significance when the great mass of New York's organized unionists again demonstrate in the great tradition of May Day.

The Left has with historic courage and vision maintained that tradition. It did so again last Wednesday. Now it must again find the way to encourage and help unite the great mass of organized labor to develop all-inclusive May Day celebrations of tomorrow.