

sadie hall

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Frank Crosswaith

Frank R. Crosswaith was born in, Frederickstad, St. Crox, Virgin Islands. Coming to this country in his teens Crosswaith started to work as an elevator operator in order to attend school at night. He graduated from the Rand School of Social Science of New York City, where he later became a teacher for many years. As a lecturer for the Socialist Party and the League for Industrial Democracy, he has made many yearly nationwide tours. It has been said that he has spoken in nearly every important university and college from the Atlantic to the Pacific Coasts.

Smooth haired, boutonnaired Frank Crosswaith, is said to be one of the foremost orators in America; a Negro Debs more or less many say. He has runned for many political offices on the Socialist Ticket. They were the President of the Board of Aldermen, Congressman of the twenty-first district, Secretary of the State and Lieutenant Governor of New York. He was also the first vice-chairman of the American Labor Party organized during the LaFollete presidential campaign.

As special organizer for the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters in its fight for better conditions for Pullman porters and maids, is one of the best known roles of Frank Crosswaith. Among other organizational activities for which he can be given credit is the Elevator Operators, Elevator Constructors, the Union Mechanics, Barbers, Laundry Workers and Motion Picture Operators.

Since 1925 when he founded the Trade Union Committee for Organizing Negro workers he has worked with most of the unions that have Negroes in their group. For the past ten years he has been the editor of Negro Labor News Service.

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Today Mr. Crosswaith is general organizer of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union. This union as is well known is the third largest union in the United States. Twelve thousand of its gigantic membership of four hundred thousand are Negroes. Added to his many activities is that of chairman of the Harlem Branch of the Workers Defense League.

Mr. Crosswaith states that the organization of a United Negro Trade has been a life long dream. A testimonial dinner given in 1935 which lauded the twenty years of devoted service in the economical and social advancement of all workers, laid the foundation for this dream. He also claimed that, "any improvement in the status of the Negro worker must come within the framework of the legitimate American Labor movement." To accomplish this aim, a delegated conference of Negro and white trade Unionists was held July 20, 1935 to lay the basis for the establishment of a United Negro Trades to serve the Negro worker as the United Hebrew Trades, serves the Jewish worker, the Women's Trade Union League serves women workers, and as the Italian Chamber of Labor served the interest of workers of Italian nationality. The work of this committee it is said is the most constructive among Negroes since the Emancipation.