The Prize Package: Freedom

Review
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WHEN EDITH SAMPSON concluded a month's lecture tour through western Germany, she left not only good will but also took away with her the heartfelt thanks of the Germans for her work in the United Nations on behalf of the welfare and return of prisoners of war.

Members of her audience told of their appreciation for focusing UN attention on the Soviet Union's adamant refusal to account for prisoners in Soviet custody. This feeling was reiterated as she spoke to 19 different audiences, met with press representatives and with the US Information Centers and 10 women's organizations as follows: "My Experiences with the UN," "Security Begins at Home" and "United Nations Work for Peace." She participated in two round-table discussions: "What German Women Have Done since 1945" and "Women in the United Nations." Several radio commentators interviewed her and she broadcast a New Year's message to the women of Germany.

PRESIDENT TRUMAN NAMED Edith Sampson, well-known Chicago attorney, as alternate US delegate to the fifth General Assembly meeting in 1950. At the time, she said, "some enemies of the free world got hold of the free world and began to exploit it. I did not like it very well."

In the face of Communist agents' threats and their vituperative comment that she was only appointed because of America's oppression of the Negro and because "she was doomed to be a dismal failure," she proved the hollowness of their campaign. With her keen mind, trained and practiced in criminal law and domestic relations, she took up her post by steeping herself with factual materials.

She pressed in the United Nations for an impartial commission on prisoners of war with the power to check evidence and records in an effort to find a humanitarian solution and to ease the anxiety of families still awaiting news five years after the war. Mrs. Sampson defined international interest in the problem in her committee statement during the General Assembly meeting: "Millions of people in all countries, who are not in any way connected with these particular prisoners of war, can feel and understand the suffering of others. They cannot be disinterested in what we, as their representatives, do about this human problem. Those who themselves have suffered and struggled hardest for their human rights will feel this situation most acutely. They know that the rights of men are involved in the struggle for the rights of any group of men."

THIS YEAR, ON Jan. 21, the commission began meetings in Geneva with the hope that the Soviet Union could be prevailed upon to return those still alive and to account for those PWs who have died.

At the US Information Center in Frankfurt she spoke to an audience that overflowed into an adjoining room. She said that, at the beginning of a world tour with the Town Hall of the Air during 1950, "I did not realize that two-thirds of the population of the world are colored people...I realize that people may not be the same color, may not speak the same language and, having talked with people, people all over the world are looking for the same thing, peace and security."

In the course of the Town Hall's itinerary in Asia, she related that she saw "so much chaos and so many people who had never tasted milk nor fresh water, nor had ever lived in a house—people who were not interested in Communism but in their next meal...I knew then that we in America had freedom but I had never been able to evaluate it."

During the past year she has directed her energies toward informing others about the United Nations and what the individual can do to bring peace and security to the world. "I am not optimistic that peace will come tomorrow; this situation that exists in the world today is different, different from anything we have ever had and it will take years and years before we work out anything that will be lasting. We are not interested in peace

Mrs. Else Demma (left), chairman of Berlin Association of Professional Women, and Mrs. Helen B. Nixon (center), head of Berlin Element Women's Affairs Section, greet Mrs. Sampson on her arrival at Tempelhof Airport on her second visit in two years. (PRB BE-HICO photo by Schubert)
alone, but peace with freedom,” Mrs. Sampson told her German audience, adding that “I feel at home with people who see eye-to-eye with me, people who are looking for peace and security.”

LOOKING BACK OVER her trip through West Germany, Mrs. Sampson reported: “All I did was explain that we can have peace only through strength, because the enemies of the free world have no respect for anything but strength. I believe the German people owe it to themselves to join in their own defense. I told them that the United States has bolstered and built up Germany with our skills and techniques and now that the country is economically sound, it would be a prize to an enemy. If the Germans remain stripped of defenses they can be picked off like apples off a tree. As members of the free world, they must prepare themselves in the event of aggression.

“I told the German people that there isn’t an American in the Occupation Forces who wouldn’t rather be home in the United States. Everybody knows we Americans aren’t aggressive or imperialistic. I said that there isn’t a Negro soldier in Germany making $70 or $105 a month of army pay who hasn’t left a $350 or $400 a month job back home. They are here at a great sacrifice.”

The audiences and those familiar with Mrs. Sampson’s personality realize that her informal manner creates a friendly atmosphere for discussion. She has humor, charm and an ability to approach ticklish questions with candor. Generally, the discussion and question-and-answer period proved challenging to both the audience and the speaker. Besides repeated questions on the situation of PWs in the Soviet Union, the other problems discussed concerned illegitimate children left in Germany by occupation troops, particularly those of Negro troops; progress in improvement of race relations in the United States, and a comparison of the rehabilitation of Germany with that of Japan.

In some cities she spoke twice a day in her tour, which included Wiesbaden, Friedburg, Darmstadt, Frankfurt, Berlin, Freiburg, Tuebingen, Stuttgart, Nuremberg, Munich, Heidelberg, Kassel, Hamburg, Bremen and Hanover.

MRS. SAMPSON, WELL REMEMBERED in Berlin from a visit there two years ago, drew capacity crowds. There she followed the same busy schedule she had in other cities. She spoke to four groups including the Berlin Club for Professional Women, representing the most highly trained women of that city, and visited American troops stationed there.

British, French and US representatives arranged her program in their particular areas. By the time the tour ended, Mrs. Sampson had met leading German political figures, men and women in the federal and state parliaments, and mayors and civic leaders in the various communities. Her contacts ranged from lawyers, business and professional women to religious leaders, educators and journalists. Mrs. John J. McCloy, wife of the US High Commissioner for Germany, entertained her at luncheon with women guests from the parliament and government ministries.

With the Negro battalion at Hanau, Mrs. Sampson shared Thanksgiving turkey dinner. Wherever she went the audience always included many Americans now stationed in Germany, including Negro troops whom she called “the best ambassadors we have ever had, not because you are good soldiers but because you are good exhibits.”

Proud of the fact that the United States “has done something about race relations,” she pointed to the fact that in the 1860’s slaves did not go to school, nor do they today in Europe. “We are moving out of the darkness,” she said, “80,000 of my people are in colleges in America today.”

When she finished speaking Mrs. Sampson left much for her audience to think about:

“We will not be fooled, we have the prize package — freedom. We can only keep it by protecting ourselves and by holding it closely and high.

“We need to improve our knowledge, to live more intelligently, to live as humanly as possible.”

HICOGlers Aid Needy Students

A check for DM 2,000 (equivalent to $476) has been given the German-American Women’s Club student aid fund by the disbanding Hicogler Club, social organization of employees of OLC Bavaria.

Sidney S. Siskind, president of the Hicogler Club, handed the check to the co-presidents of the German-American Women’s Club, Mrs. Robert L. Taylor and Princess Pilar of Bavaria, at a ceremony in Munich Feb. 21.

This sum, to be used as a revolving student loan fund, represented the liquidated assets of the Hicogler Club and was presented with the full approval of its membership in the furtherance of good relations between Germans and Americans in Bavaria. The remaining assets of the club, which amounted to $138, were contributed to the recent Munich Military Post March of Dimes campaign.