

POUGHKEEPSIE

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## FIRST LADY VIEWS DEMOCRACY AFIELD

Work Camp Students of Many  
Countries Reveal New Per-  
spective to Mrs. Roosevelt

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Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

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28.—Sticky with paint and grubby with the mud of honest toil, about sixty boy and girl students from this country and abroad swarmed to the steps of an old mansion on the bluffs above the Hudson this afternoon to tell the wife of the President of the United States what they were learning about democracy. She was eager to know.

It made a significant tableau at the first Work Camp for Democracy in West Park, N. Y., opposite Poughkeepsie.

Behind Mrs. Roosevelt as she faced the heterogeneous group of youngsters, was a noble backdrop. The wide sweep of wooded hills across the serene river flowing in the middle distance, and, in the immediate background, the green terraces sloping gently away toward the water with two ancient elms standing guard at precise angles from the house, half-way down the lawn. Nature herself reflected utter peace.

### Earnest Seeking for Light

But among the campers, one-third of them refugees from troubled countries, there was a feeling for earnest inquiry borne of an evaluation of experiences.

A serious, handsome young German, 23 years old, spoke simply of the four years he had spent in a concentration camp for his political beliefs.

A pretty blonde girl in pink shirt and white shorts, with coquettish pink bows in her bobbed hair, talked of the new meanings she had found for words which were commonplace when she was studying social welfare at home in Vienna.

A tall, intelligent Negro girl posed a query about the possible similarity of attitudes toward Jews in Germany and toward her own race in this country, and got a direct and unequivocal opinion.

Each represented a minority group, Mrs. Roosevelt pointed out, and the possibility of likeness in the prejudices they encounter was inherent, whereas the problem of democracies was to make all groups work together.

### Young Folk Hard at Work

Mrs. Roosevelt had not waited for volunteers to inform her about the curriculum at the camp, which has brought outstanding individuals together for the experiment of working and studying democracy, to give them new experiences and a new perspective on governments.

She had left her car in a narrow lane and scrambled down a steep bank to see the pickaxes and shovels in operation at the first work project, a new swimming pool in which probably few of the group will ever enjoy a splash.

She had motored back up a road where another group labored under a hot sun, digging drains on either side and leveling the roadway.

And she had walked beneath the scaffolding where girls in overalls and boys in shorts and sneakers wielded paint brushes with serious artistry on the front entrance of "Aberdeen House," the big residence where half the camp is quartered. Tea and cookies were dispensed as the campers and their visitors assembled on the river side.

### Toil and Responsibility

Bob Lane of Harvard, head resident by vote of the democratic government established when the camp opened nearly a month ago, welcomed the guest of honor and presided at the discussion period.

Mrs. Roosevelt was full of questions herself about the new plan of labor, study and play and its effect on the campers. She was delighted when a girl from Albany, Ga., retorted that she had acquired a new respect for labor since she herself had been handling a spade and washing out tea towels and that she now had an interest in the youth movement, which had never stirred her before.

The concentration camp veteran from Germany supplemented this with a declaration that he had encountered extensive anti-Fascist propaganda; that his stay in this country had given him new perspectives and that he was now hearing for the first time the phrase "individual responsibility" and seeing in this camp how it works. All the propaganda hitherto given to him used no such words, he added.

### Freedom of Discussion

Algernon D. Black, chairman of the executive committee of the work camp, greeted Mrs. Roosevelt on her arrival from Hyde Park and explained to her the plan which led a number of prominent educators and others to join the sponsors for the experiment.

Each of those attending the session, which opened early in August and will close after Labor Day, agreed to contribute four hours of manual labor daily and to abide by the camp's self-government plan.

Campers are from 18 to 23 years of age and represent several of the largest universities in this country as well as those abroad, Mr. Black stated. In other work camps no such discussion of controversial subjects was possible, he added.

The library available on governmental and industrial subjects was provided from Vassar College and the topics of open forums are studied by key students who lead the discussions.