



# National Sharecroppers Week

MARCH 4th to 10th, 1940

*Auspices: Southern Tenant Farmers' Union*

Rockwell Kent

January 3, 1940

National Sharecroppers Week  
Headquarters  
Organizing Committee  
Room 302  
112 EAST 19th STREET  
New York City  
ALgonquin 4-4954-5

*Request to sponsor*

Dear Dr. DuBois :

We call your attention to an issue which demands nationwide attention. As you probably know, an entire region of the United States, the South, is bogged down under an outmoded system of tenant farming. What began as a makeshift arrangement between cotton planters and freed but landless Negro slaves after the Civil War is now a vicious condition affecting the lives of 8,000,000 American citizens.

Each January new waves of evictions from the cotton plantations force thousands of people onto the highways, wandering over the waste lands of the South in search of food and shelter. The victims of this system are the sharecroppers, who till land they do not own, live in rickety shacks, literally starve for lack of healthful food, are deprived of the vote and have little or no cash income.

We must admit that while millions of refugees look toward our country for sympathy and aid, we have done far too little to end the human misery in our own backyard. The farm tenancy problem poisons the very roots of our agricultural economy and threatens the security of all Americans. We cannot afford to ignore it.

For the past four years, the Southern Tenant Farmers Union, representing 35,000 organized tenants, sharecroppers and cotton hands, white and Negro, and working against incredible odds without racial barriers, has initiated NATIONAL SHARECROPPERS WEEK. Its objectives are two-fold: to raise funds for organization, education and amelioration of conditions among the sharecroppers, but particularly to bring greater understanding of this problem to the general public.

This year National Sharecroppers Week is making a special effort to focus public attention on the plight of the sharecroppers through a series of educational meetings and activities in New York and throughout the country. As formerly, representatives from the Union will present their point of view out of their own experience. Funds raised during the Week will be turned over to the Southern Tenant Farmers Union.

Won't you join in sponsoring National Sharecroppers Week? Your endorsement of this project would be a significant contribution toward an improved American democracy.

Yours very truly,

*Pauli Murray*  
Secretary

18-16-44