

*members  
letters*

469 West Avenue, Norwalk, Connecticut

Mrs. Henry M. Robert, Pres. General, N.S.D.A.R.

Memorial Continental Hall, Washington, D.C.

Dear Madam President- General:-

As a member for forty-six years of the Society I wish to join my protest to those of many others against the actions of some individuals or committee which has put our Society so terribly in the wrong.

I refer, of course, to the refusal of the use of Constitution Hall for a concert to one who is acknowledged by many competent authorities to be the greatest singer of to-day - a refusal based on her race! And this too, in a year when the first project stated in "What the Daughters Do" is encouragement and development of and acquaintance with native American music!

The Daughters of the American Revolution is a patriotic society, supposedly loyal to the principles of our country, foremost among which are "all men are created free and equal" - "without discrimination because of race, color, ..." and the majority of the Daughters, doubtless, acknowledge the Christian religion and our Bible where we read "God hath made of one blood all the nations of the earth." How can we take such action as has been done in our name and not be party to a great wrong and a denial of our principles?

I joined the Society in 1892 when my mother organized the Norwalk Chapter, the 4th in Connecticut and, while remaining a member of my own Chapter, I have just helped my youngest sister to organize the newest one in Connecticut, the Joel Barlow Chapter of Redding, named in honor of a son of Redding (and our gr.gr.gr uncle) who was one of the great apostles of liberty, peace and democracy.

I do not want to be forced to give up my loyalty to the Society because

cause of its disloyalty to and denial of the principles for which it should stand, the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States and the Bill of Rights, but it is most mortifying to be obliged to apologize for and try to explain away (as I have had to do many times) actions which are entirely out of harmony with the spirit upon which the organization was founded.

I know how strong that racial prejudice is in some people and in many parts of the country but we should do all in our power to diminish it rather than act so as to deepen it. How can we criticise the treatment being meted out to Jews in other countries when we are a party to such racial discriminations here?

There have been some feeble excuses and evasions reported in the newspapers and on the radio but I have heard nothing authoritative - perhaps you have made a statement but if so I have missed it. It seems to me that you, as head of the Society should state where the Society stands officially in this matter that those of use who do not approve of the action- and we are not a small number- may know whether we have been put in a false position by an unofficial action or whether there is some regulation which must be corrected, in the interested of Christianity and Patriotism.

Yours, for the honor of the Daughters,

*Clara Hossman Hill*



March 25, 1939

Dear Miss Hill:

Your letter has been received. The President General has been on a prolonged trip to State Conferences and it has been impossible for her to answer mail while en route. She has instructed me to send the following facts to you.

Constitution Hall was already engaged by another musical organization for Easter Sunday when the request for its use by the artist as mentioned in your letter was received. The rules governing the use of Constitution Hall are of seven years standing, and are in accordance with the policy of theatres, auditoriums, hotels and public schools of the District of Columbia. Separate public schools, play grounds, and public recreational facilities are established within the District of Columbia by regulations adopted under the authority of law. In view of the existence of provisions in prevailing agreements with other organizations and concert bureaus, and the policy which has been adopted in the past, an exception could not be made.

At the recent Board meeting a full discussion took place, and the Board voted to maintain the rules.

There was no question of artistic or musical standing involved.

Sincerely yours,

Secretary to the  
President General.

Miss Clara Mossman Hill,  
469 West Avenue,  
Norwalk, Conn.