



'We Don't Have to Give Up Our Beliefs'

# Civil Rights Fighter Ignores Barbs

'When One Person Is Persecuted All of Us Are Persecuted'

By MARIAN PFROMMER  
Pictures by Lawrence S. Millard

YVETTE NATHANS has been called a Communist, a radical and a selfish wife. She is none of the three.

She's just a housewife who believes in civil rights, and is willing to fight for her beliefs.

A member of the Congress of Racial Equality and the Women's Intergroup Committee of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, Mrs. Nathans has fought for fair housing, registered voters in South Providence, taken part in every recent civil rights demonstration in Providence and traveled to Springfield, Mass., for the demonstrations there last month.

During her three years of civil rights activity anonymous telephone voices have branded her with the names "Communist" and "radical."

Even her relatives have received calls, from persons who said Mrs. Nathans would ruin her husband's dentistry practice by her civil rights work.

But Mrs. Nathans and her husband, Dr. Lee Nathans, learned to ignore these barbs.

Calls referring to her husband's practice once bothered Mrs. Nathans but her husband, who supports her work against discrimination, calmed her, saying:

"It that kind of people can ruin me, then we'll go live in a tent if we're forced to. But we don't have to give up our beliefs."

Her husband's support made Mrs. Nathans more confident that her fight against prejudice was just.

Why does this woman, the

mother of three young children, leave her Cranston home to petition for equal opportunity?

"Prejudice is a terrible thing," Mrs. Nathans said, describing her feelings. "And I guess I've always felt that when one person is being persecuted, all of us are really being persecuted at the same time."

Mrs. Nathans' Jewish heritage strengthened her beliefs in equality.

Referring to Hitler's persecution of the Jewish people, she said softly, "After that I don't see how any Jew can stand on the sidelines when there is discrimination against a minority group."

Mrs. Nathans interest in civil rights began several years ago, when she heard a lecturer describe discrimination in housing.

"He said all of us could find out about discrimination just by picking up the telephone and answering ads for apartments here in Providence."

"He told us that, at the end of our inquiry we should say, 'Oh, by the way, I'm a Negro.'"

Mrs. Nathans followed the man's advice. The results shocked her into action.

"When I called," she said, "people said either 'Oh, you wouldn't be happy here' or 'We don't mix the races in this building.' Some of them just hung up when I said I was a Negro."

After this experience Mrs.

Nathans began working for civil rights.

Her only rewards have been personal satisfaction.

Describing her visit to Springfield recently, she summed up this feeling when she said:

"I suppose people said we were outside agitators there. But you should have seen how happy the Negroes in Springfield were, knowing that we cared enough to come."

"Just from their eyes you could tell they were saying 'thank you' and 'God bless you.'"

Earlier this year, she worked diligently for passage of the state's fair housing bill.

"I think I had a perfect attendance record at the legislature last session," she said, with a smile, noting that she attended every session until the bill was passed April 12.

Mrs. Nathans only worry has been for her children. Taking an active part in the civil rights struggle has meant that she must be away from home often.

During the fair housing hearings, when she spent all her days at the legislature, she hired a babysitter for her younger children, Jolie Ann, now 4, and Philip, 5.

"I felt very guilty, leaving them like that," she said, "but then I thought... I'm really doing it for them. I wouldn't want them to grow up knowing their mother had done nothing to end this prejudice."

Mrs. Nathans' children, young as they are, are aware

of the civil rights movement.

"They go through the house singing, 'We Shall Overcome,'" Mrs. Nathans said, explaining that she taught them this anthem of civil rights workers.

Her older son, Michael, 12, is an avid reader. He follows the newspaper accounts of the discrimination struggle and eagerly questions his mother about her activities.

"I think he thinks I'm winning this war singlehandedly," Mrs. Nathans said. "I'm sure he thinks his mother will go down in history."

Mrs. Nathans' dedication to civil rights carries through in all aspects of her life.

On each personal check, she glues a sticker that reads:

"As your customer, I support Equal Employment and Service for all regardless of Race, Creed or Color."

She refuses to buy products made in the South and, although her family once had a winter home in Florida, she says she will not travel south again until prejudice disappears there.

Sitting on the tastefully decorated patio of her spacious ranch home on Tupelo Hill Drive in Cranston, Mrs. Nathans was the picture of a well-do suburban housewife.

Only her philosophy sounded different.

"Here we are, wallowing in luxury while people around us are starving. It just isn't fair and if I can do something to help just one person in my life, I'll consider my life a success."

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The Evening Bulletin

for and about **WOMEN**

**Paris Hat Collections Show Elegance, Mastery**

The press wires have been sizzling with St. Laurent's success, with Dior's continued elegance, with Balenciaga's complete mastery, with the surprise of Ungaro stepping into Courreges' expensive little boots. And the wires crackle too with the hat... bigger... better... more important.

Lauren showed Jackie Coogan caps in checked felt, mink rollers with pale, pale felt crowns, felt toques completely latched with ostrich feathers, white on black.

Jacques Esterel adores the tricorn... every model wore them way back on the head.

Bohan at Dior, his red wool back belted redingote, best selling number, had a matching felt hat very wide of brim. All his models wore this big felt hat turned up like men in an old Frans Hals' painting sometimes rimmed in fur or feather.

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