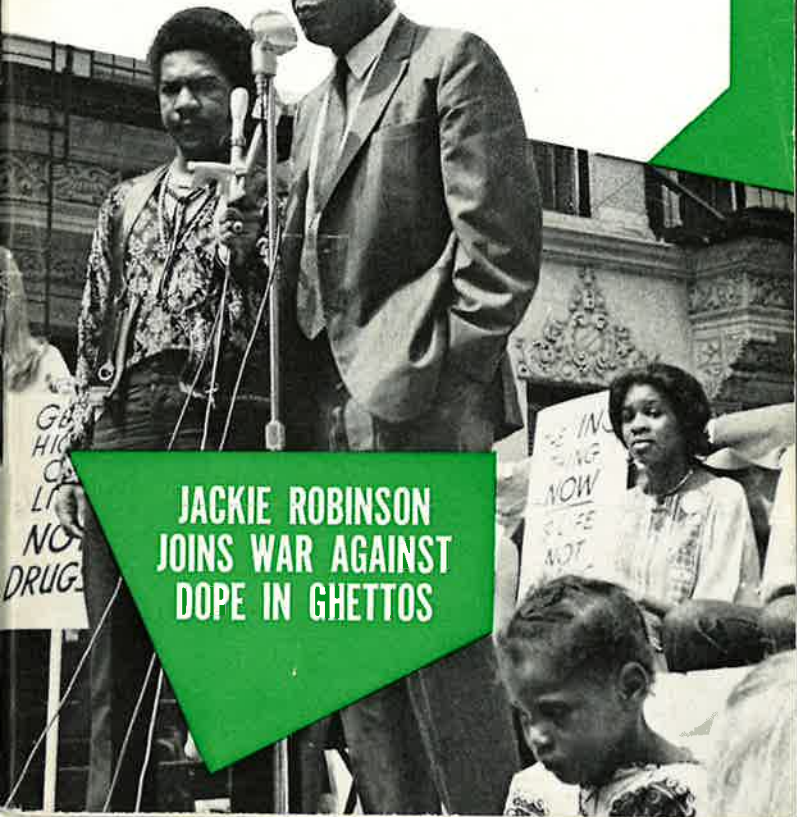


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JET

SEPT. 10, 1970

BLACK MAN WHO
IS NATION'S ONLY
SOURCE OF SUPPLY
FOR RARE BLOOD



JACKIE ROBINSON
JOINS WAR AGAINST
DOPE IN GHETTOS

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ROBINSON JOINS WAR AGAINST DOPE IN GHETTOS

MAN WHO BATTLED BASEBALL BIAS

By CORDELL S. THOMPSON

There was a time when heroin and "junk" were considered afflictions of the "amoral or ignorant," lower classes and Black ghetto dwellers, alone. But lately the use of hard drugs has been spreading like wildfire among the children of the so-called respectable, white middle class. And as the daily press points out the users, and as frightened middle-class parents begin to demand action which will deal with "the problem," treatment "experts" and politicians are moving to the fore with solutions. For the past 30 years, when American addicts were primarily poor and from Black and brown communities, the same men who are now talking about the "answers" were stone silent.



Following son's drug involvement in 1968, Jackie today sparks fight against drugs, joins in anti-dope demonstration.

CALLS DRUGS 'FORM OF SLAVERY'



Standing in crowded corridor of hospital, Mrs. Martha Davis, a leader in fight against drugs, discusses health care.

There is simply no comparison between the magnitude of the drug addiction problem in the oppressed, Black communities and in a middle-class setting. Even though a white addict may be isolated or shunned in his own society, the Black and brown community itself is strangled by a "drug culture" which affects almost every man, woman and child who live in the ghetto. Frustrated by red tape, adhesive tape, long talk and short action, then angered as narcotic-related deaths continue to climb, Black Americans across the country, skeptical that governmental agencies really want to do anything about the drug problem in the Black community, are banding together, striking out on their own, to find their own solutions.

Community organizations—from local narcotic agencies to groups of Muslims, the Black Panther Party and The Young Lords—religious leaders such as Rev. O. D. Dempsey and Rev. Wyatt T. Walker, pastor of Harlem's Canaan Baptist Church; recently returned Stokely Carmichael,

Whites 'Gloated' Over Hero's Problem With Son

and sports figures, including the Chicago Cubs' Ernie Banks, are all beginning to serve notice on those who would exploit their people, both the drug pusher and the professional "program pushers." Many of these people are insisting that if the white, middle class and politicians are really interested in combatting addiction in the oppressed communities, they ought to insist that considerable money be poured into the ghetto and let the community decide where to put it.

One of the staunchest drug fighters to emerge in recent months is Jackie Robinson. Many Blacks, who seem to have no other pre-occupation, label the first Black man in major league baseball as a "Johnny-come-lately" to the drug fight. For many years while only brief passing mentions of it leaked out in the national press, the former baseball great carried a weight that so many thousands of Black parents live under every day—his own son, Jackie Jr., a Vietnam war veteran, was a junkie.

"It's difficult to explain how one feels in this kind of situation, finding out something like that," Robinson told JET. "We didn't have any idea that our boy was involved in drugs. Regardless of how a parent tries to bring up a son, you can never be around 24 hours a day to know who their associates are. We didn't know whether to throw up our hands to say, 'Well, Jackie, you got yourself in this problem, get yourself out of it.' I really can hardly describe the numbing feeling that my wife and I had at that time. We recognized that we had a responsibility, and we made the change," the graying Robinson recalled. "We no longer worried about our next-door neighbor or the people in the community who started saying, 'Gee, Jackie has a son arrested for drug addiction.' Our only thought was for the boy, and we decided to get him every bit of help that we could, to try to understand the problem and it didn't make a difference what it meant in time and effort."

His widely regarded prestige as the first Black man in baseball's Hall of Fame meant little to Robinson, now a

first-rate business executive. "Prestige didn't mean a thing. I mean, who cares about prestige when you have a boy whose very life could hang in the balance. Our feeling was, 'The hell with the next-door neighbor or anybody else who was going to look at us and talk.' Our only concern was for Jackie and how we could help him," Robinson said.

Neither were the Robinsons concerned over the smear letters they received from persons, mostly white, who were pleased and gloated over the fact that Robinson's son had found himself in trouble. This spurred him on even more, the former Brooklyn Dodgers' great said. Jackie Jr.'s problem was discovered early and his parents got started at the solution before he became a hardcore addict. The son wanted help, it was pointed out. In his new role as an advocate against drug abuse, working with groups like Mothers Against Drugs (MAD), Robinson observes youngsters who have been robbed of all potential or future because of drugs. "Some of these kids see so little possibilities for the future, and their frustrations



Relaxing in liberated section of hospital, female addicts are given Methodone injections in treatment for drugs.

Says U.S. Doing Too Little To Help Black Youths

are so great that it means very little to them," he said.

"I'm only sorry that it took a personal and serious tragedy for me to realize and recognize the seriousness of this problem. I hope that other Black people don't sit down and wait until it strikes home before they get involved," Robinson cautioned. Working with the Harlem women in MAD, hearing them talk about the number of deaths they see in their community every week, indicates that there are not enough Blacks involved in the fight against drugs. "If we don't do something we're going to lose so many of our kids through death by drugs. There are so many great kids out there who are so frustrated that they just don't understand and know what the problems are. We have so many tragedies in this country that many of our Black kids are trying to get away from, and unfortunately they turn to drugs to get away from them," Robinson mused. "The federal government is not doing enough for these Black kids. We have them coming out of high school, coming back from Vietnam with no real future to look to and seemingly no one to turn to, then the problem is further complicated with our youngsters because they are Black."

Jackie Jr.'s problem with drugs came about not too long after he returned from a year's duty in Vietnam in 1966. For the past two years he has been a resident of Daytop Therapeutic Center in Seymour, Conn. At 23, he has about two months to go before he is graduated, after which time he hopes to become a staff member at the center where he could counsel other youngsters who might happen to repeat his mistake. More than anything else, the Robinsons' credit love and understanding with helping their son overcome his problem. About a month ago the center sponsored a picnic for the parents of residents. "When it was time to leave and I was getting ready to leave I extended my hand to Jackie," the father told JET, "and for the first time in many years, he brushed that hand aside and embraced me. Nothing has pleased me more than that one particular incident."

BUSINESS

Chain Store Gives Large Order To Plastics Firm

A small Black-owned manufacturer of inexpensive plastic utensils obtained an order from F. W. Woolworth Co. which will amount to \$200,000 over a six-month period. The Detroit firm, Young Men on the Move, celebrates its first anniversary with the introduction of three new low-priced plastic products. President of the enterprise, Jefferson Hicks, said that although Woolworth's was the largest order the company has received to date, he expects the company's sales volume to exceed \$1 million by the year's end with orders from other nationwide retailers.

Motown Hires Yale Graduate As General Counsel

Yale Law School graduate Charles A. Moore, 40-year-old former senior attorney for Capitol, was named general counsel for Motown Record Corp., the company announced in Los Angeles. Motown said Moore, as the first general counsel in the company's 10-year history, will represent the recording empire in all its legal affairs.

► **Moving Up:** Congratulating Edward Fitzpatrick (r) on his appointment as sales manager for San Bernardino District, one of southern California's largest, Dodge Regional Manager R. D. Loomis sends the Elyria, Ohio, native into the field where he will be responsible for wholesale sale of cars, trucks in 11 Dodge dealerships.

