

SOCRATES OF CIVIL RIGHTS

Good day everyone...it's a beautiful day in Pennsylvania.

Bayard Rustin, a famous civil rights leader, organization official and lecturer has been called the "Socrates of the Civil Rights Movement" and one of the chief strategists in the Negro struggle for equality. He helped to develop the Congress of Racial Equality, was Special Advisor to the late Martin Luther King, and the chief architect of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. He has been a leading pacifist agitator, and that pacifism, so opposite his persuasive fire as a public speaker, and the chairman of his personality has contributed greatly to the non-violence that generally prevails today in the civil rights movement. Rustin has become a world figure and yet returned periodically to Pennsylvania to study literature and history at Cheney State College. His early days present an enigma; as a Quaker, he searched for a strong organization opposed to war and thus joined the Young Communist League. He earned his living singing at the Old Cafe Society in New York with famed Josh White and Huddie Ledbetter, the now-famous Leadbelly. He was a professional-good. By 1941 Rustin says that it was unmistakably clear that he had been foolish in joining the Communist League. He refuted it. Freedom rides in early days found Rustin there; he headed President Truman's Committee Against Discrimination in the Armed Forces. In 1955 he organized Martin Luther King's bus boycott, later in 1960, agitated at

both the national political conventions for civil rights. In 1964, by walking along 125th Street in Harlem, threatened with chiding as an "Uncle Tom", he quelled possible riots there. Today he directs the work of the A. Philip Randolph institute whose purpose it is to cure basic economic and social ills in the nation. Rustin has made it the hard way. One of twelve children born in West Chester, Pennsylvania, he says he was illegitimate, and raised by grandparents. The family was poor, but grandfather was a caterer and there was always enough left to eat because of leftovers from banquets. He says his diet was pate de foie gras and Roquefort cheese. He was an honor student at West Chester High, member of the Glee Club, debating society, played fine tennis and was on state championship track and football squads. A West Chester athlete and singer, he became one of the nation's finest fighters for civil rights; the leader of the movement-- Bayard Rustin, of West Chester, Pennsylvania.

This is Pete Wambach. It's a beautiful day in Pennsylvania.