

# A NEW NEGRO REPUBLIC

## Max Barber Creates New Country Where Negro Flag Can Float

It Is All Here—On Paper Anyhow

By J. MAX BARBER

PHILADELPHIA, Mar. 31—One of the phrases which rolled so sonorously and so frequently off the tongue of the late President Wilson was that of the right of "self-determination of weak peoples and small nations." In his triumphant march through France, Italy and England he repeatedly voiced his passionate desire to see weaker peoples in complete control of their own government. His high sounding addresses led us to believe that he was altogether in favor of the casting down of every selfish and tyrannical power and the substitution of free government, where all of the people should have a voice in their own affairs.

Of course, the weak side of Mr. Wilson's position in Europe was the glaring inconsistency of his position at home. Here in America we possessed the widest opportunity for the application of these noble principles, but failed absolutely to use them. In the United States there are 10,000,000 colored people. At present

they have one member in the Congress, no member in the Senate, no member on the Supreme Court bench and but a scattering voice in four or five state legislatures. This is not because the colored part of the population does not desire representation. It is due to the manipulation of that same tyrannical and selfish power which Mr. Wilson so vehemently denounced in Europe.

In the south, where the bulk of the Negro people reside, the race is not only not represented, but, on the other hand, is grossly misrepresented. America's pretenses at moral leadership will be jeered at as long as this condition prevails.

At the conclusion of the great World War there was an opportunity for a noble application of Mr. Wilson's doctrine of "self-determination." The English controlled that part of Africa known as Nigeria. France controlled most of Equatorial Africa. Germany controlled the Cameroons and Southwest Africa. All of these nations were in Africa for plunder and for purely selfish reasons. The war wrested from Germany all of her African colonies.

This territory was parcelled out to the leading allies under so-called mandates.

Here was an opportunity, if ever one existed, for America and Europe to cast out selfishness and do a genuinely great deed. Black people, both from America and Africa, had fought heroically on the side of the allies in France. France knows what she owes to her colored troops from Senegambia. The Negroes of America furnished one thirteenth of the American army in France.

Does it seem to be asking too much to request the plundering nations of Europe to give back to those black people their own land? What a magnificent gesture of statesmanship it would be if the conquering allies should encourage the founding of a new Negro republic on some of that territory which Germany, France and England controlled!

The Cameroons ought to form the nucleus for such a republic. Southwest Africa could never be returned to Germany. The German army slew two-thirds of the Herero population in order to teach the natives

humility. The remainder they enslaved, or mutilated or drove into the desert to starve. Belgium learned how to handle her Congo Negroes from the domineering example of the Germans in Hereroland. The splitting up of these colonies among the allies has simply sown the seed for future trouble.

There is but one just and proper solution—give back the land to the people to whom it belongs. English methods in Nigeria are not vastly different from German methods in Southwest Africa. France has always been the fairest of the white nations to the colored races. Let her give French equatorial Africa to the cause. Add Nigeria and French Equatorial Africa to the Cameroons and there is sufficient territory for a great nation. The coast line of these three colonies would afford a remarkable western littoral. The Gulf of Guinea bounds the west, while the light of Biafra bites deeply into the Cameroons. The southern boundary would rest on the great Congo river. The Niger, also a great water course, would traverse the entire northern part of the country. Lake Tsad would be on the Northwest. The combined areas of these separate colonies certainly would not be less than 800,000 square miles. It would have a coast line of, perhaps, over a 1,000 miles, a population of at least twelve million people, and a land that nature had blessed with every variety of production.

The white man—and the Negro who has been trained to see everything through the white man's eyes—would doubt these peoples' capacity for self-government. They would question the spiritual, psychological and intellectual preparedness of the natives. They would raise the question of the number of races involved and the difficulties encountered in assimilation.

Let me state frankly, that no matter how crude their laws and government, natives are better off, to my mind, with the natural development of their own institutions than they are with the arrogance and cruelty of the super-man hung over their land as a dead weight to their self-respect. No one race is good enough to be charged with the full responsibility of the welfare of another race. Such an arrangement is always fatal to the interests of the less advantageously placed people.

The whole scheme and course of modern colonization rests on greed and selfishness. There are no exceptions. The white man is not gifted to any extraordinary degree with disinterested imagination and humanitarianism. Certainly no more so than other humans. Colonial movements are, in the main, selfish games of grab. All of this talk about the blessings of civilization is camouflage—a mere cloak for baser designs. If bastardy and cruelty and domineering overlordship are blessings, then these people receive an abundance of blessings. Colonies offer peculiar scope and temptation for vampirism, for exploitation, for domineering pomposity and for that already over developed racial egotism of the white races.

Those who rule for the mother country foster her interests, not the interests of the people concerned. They must be always aggrandizing themselves at the expense of the colonies. Truth and justice have always been degraded when one man has all of the say. The American colonies found that out. The Belgium Congo certainly found it to be true. English and Boer cruelties taught this fact to the Zulus and Kaffirs. And alas, what did not Southwest Africa learn from Germany! When Germany took over the land of the Hereros there were upwards of 300,000 souls in the land. Six years later there were not 100,000! Do not these figures tell an awful tale? In the year, 1904, the German vampire, Von Trothman, ordered the extinction of these brave people. Their property and cattle were confiscated, a fabulous reward was offered for their chief's head, the limbs, ears and noses of many were cut off, a remnant fled to the desert to perish and those who remained were compelled to wear badges and brands like cattle. All of this because Chief Samuel Maheroro wanted his land and country left alone. Is there any condition of savagery that could be worse for these people?

Wherever there are overlords, there are two brands of justice. This is necessary for the overlord to maintain his false and pompous position of superiority.

It is thus that I believe that all people are better prepared to attend to their own affairs than are outsiders. It is better that they kill each other than that the white man should kill the majority in order to kill the self-respect of those who remain.

The country I have here delineated as fit for the beginning of a Negro republic has a peculiar spiritual fitness for such an enterprise. Bornu in Nigeria was once the seat of a mighty Negro empire. In the 16th century these people had a kingdom not inferior to some of the European kingdoms of that day. They had a law-making body with an upper branch known as the "Nogana" or house of the princes and tribal chiefs and a lower house known as the "Kokenewa" or House of the army captains. This was before the American republic was thought of. Their kingship was also elective. They had judges, courts, armies, schools. In Hausa there was a great university. The Hausa Negro of today is considered the Frenchman of Africa because of his courtesy and

politeness and because of the delicate shadings of his language. There are many archaeological and philological traces of a buried civilization. The iniquitous slave trade destroyed their culture and civilization.

Why not, under an international committee, make a genuine effort to redeem Africa through the formation of a Negro republic? It ought to prove to be the greatest international experiment in philanthropy and humanitarianism the world has ever seen. Is it not worth the paltry sacrifice of rubber and kola nuts to give Africa a chance once more?