

**Eric D. Walrond,<sup>1</sup> “The New Negro Faces America,” *Current History*, <sup>2</sup> Vol. 17, 1923, February, 1925.**

The negro is at the crossroads of America life. He is, probably more than any other group within our borders, the most vigorously “led.” On the one hand is the old-style leadership of Booker T. Washington’s successor, Major Robert Moton, Principal of Tuskegee, who believes, like Christ, in “turning the other cheek,” and in a maximum of industrial efficiency. On the other hand is the leadership of W.E.B. Du Bois of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, whose idea of salvation is in adequate political representation. This is the organization which is sponsoring the Dyer Anti-Lynching bill.

Towering head and shoulders above these two is Marcus Garvey, “Provisional President of Africa,” and President General of the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Committees League.

...

The rank and file of negroes are opposed to Garveyism; dissatisfied with the personal vituperation and morbid satire of Mr. Du Bois, and prone to discount Major Moton’s Tuskegee as a monument of respectable reaction. Even before the death of Booker T. Washington, Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois, Harvard Ph.D. was looked upon by the negroes as an intellectual icon. But there is now

---

<sup>1</sup> Born in British Guiana, Eric Derwent Walrond (1898-1966) was a journalist, editor, and fiction writer, best known for his story collection *Tropic Death* (1926). After emigrating to the US in 1918, Walrond joined Marcus Garvey’s Universal Negro Improvement Association and served as associate editor of *The Negro World* before becoming disillusioned and leaving the organization in 1925. Boelskevy, Mary Anne. "Walrond, Eric." Oxford African American Studies Center. May 31, 2013. Oxford University Press. Date of access 9 Aug. 2023. Davis, James. "Walrond, Eric Derwent." *Oxford African American Studies Center*. May 31, 2017. Oxford University Press. Date of access 9 Aug. 2023.

<sup>2</sup> Begun as a supplement to the *New York Times*, *Current History* (1914-present) offered “news as history, to be considered and remembered.” By 1922, editor George Washington Ochs-Oakes (1915-31) increasingly relied on university professors to serve as contributors. Mott, Frank Luther. *A History of American Magazines, 1741-1930. Volume 5, Sketches of 21 Magazines, 1905-1930, with a Cumulative Index to the 5 Vols*. Harvard University Press, 1958.

a revolt against Du Bois. The new negro feels that Mr. Du Bois is too far above the masses to comprehend their desires and aspirations. His "Darkwater," they feel, is a beautiful book, but it reveals the soul of a man who is sorry and ashamed he is not white. He hates to be black. In his writings there is a stream of endless woe, the sorrow of a mulatto whose white blood hates and despises the black in him. Clearly the issue is pretty well known on the fundamentals of present-day negro leadership. Garvey is a megalomaniac. Du Bois, unlike either Washington or the poet Dunbar, suffers from the "superiority complex."

What, then, is the outlook for the new negro? Despite the handicaps of inadequate leadership, he is making tremendous headway in industry, to say nothing of art and literature.

...

With this background of industrial prosperity what is the outlook for the negro? To give an adequate answer to this one must examine the negro's mental state. In the first place he is race-conscious. He does not want, like the American Indian, to be like the white man. He is coming to realize the great possibilities within himself, and his tendency is to develop those possibilities. He is looking toward a broader leadership. That which he has at present is either old-fashioned, unrepresentative of his spirit and desires, or stupid, corrupt, and hate mad.

Though there are thousands of college-bred negroes working as janitors and bricklayers and railroad porters, there are still more thousands in colleges and universities who are fitting themselves to become architects, engineers, chemists, manufacturers. The new negro, who does not want to go back to Africa, is fondly cherishing an ideal—and that is, that the time will come when America will look upon the negro not as a savage with an inferior mentality, but as a civilized man. The American negro of today believes intensely in America. At times, when the

train is whirling him back to dearly loved ones “below the line,” he is tempted to be bitter and morose and, perhaps, iconoclastic [sic]. But he is hoping and dreaming. He is pinning everything on everything the hope, illusion or not, that America will some day find its soul, forget the negro’s black skin, and recognize him as one of the nation’s most loyal sons and defenders.