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Says:

THE CASE OF THE NEGRO TEN YEARS AFTER THE WAR WORLD

The world thinkers are now looking backwards over the past ten years to determine what, if any, benefit the World War has brought to mankind. The New York World recently contained a symposium of American and European publicists. There is no consensus of opinion. No single authority is able to point out in a convincing way the undisputed advantage such as flowed from the French Revolution, the Revolutionary War or the Civil War. Of one thing all must be convinced, and that is, if the statesmen of the world could have foreseen ten years ago the conditions which they now observe, they never would have percolated this titanic struggle. Mr. Wilson's fourteen points have become the tetradecologue of ridicule. His high-sounding and sonorous phrases have become the object of sport and jest. His League of Peace has become a peice of a league. The world has been upset, and no one can say how it will resettle. It may be that we miss the advantage of perspective. We may be too close to the events to give them their proper placement and appraisal.

When we confine our attention to the American Negro, however, we have a much easier and simpler task. The Negro, as a group, had no immediate concern in the World War. The quarrels between the Germans and the Russians, the French and Englishmen were no concern of his. The destruction of autoeracy in Germany had absolutely no meaning to the Negroes in Georgia. The Negro follows the flag wherever it leads. His not to reason why; his but to do and die. He responded to his country's call. Whether by voluntary enlistment of conscription, when the general roll was called, he was there. He responded to the call of Woodrow Wilson, four hundred thousand strong.

Whatever advantage or disadvantage the race derived from the war was incidental, and not calculated. He was requisitioned for his man-power alone. No more account of his personal gain was considered than was accorded the Hessian hireling during the Revolutionary War. I called on Secretary Baker, along with the first delegation to urge a training camp for colored officers. We found him keenly sympathetic, though hedged in by the traditional prejudice of the Army and the prospective policy of the Democratic party.

We had high hopes that the Negro would wrest from the prejudiced and unwilling disposition of the army, recognition as an officer in the federal army by tested fitness and acknowledged capacity to lead his own race according to the requirements of war. Thanks to Secretary Baker, the camp at Des Moines was established. There was every reason to believe that the Negro was to be given a square deal. I visited the camp and addressed the cadets when their hopes ran highest. Negro officers were shortly to be commissioned within a prescribed rank in the army. But in the meantime Houston happened. There was a sudden change in public sentiment and a sudden shift in the program of commissions to be awarded. The time of training was prolonged. The race was sorely disappointed. Houston ounded the death knell of the Negro's hope for effectively functioning in the army above the level of a private soldier. The word, I am convinced was passed down from on high: "so far shalt thou go and no further." The few Negroes who received commissions as officers were so handicapped and embarrassed, that effective functioning was impossible. The Negro came out with a lower level of esteem as a qualified officer than he entered. The effect has been far reaching. Negro leadership in Negro affairs has been greatly discredited throughout the whole circle of racial life and activity.

The World War created a vacuum in the labor market of the North. Southern Negroes rushed in to fill the vacancy. This has shifted from one to two millions of the race from South to North. They have found place in the industrial and economic

life. Herein lies the chief indirect benefit which the race has derived from the war. The magnitude of this advantage is hard to calculate. It may be more profitable to consider some of the incidental situations which follow in the train of this Northern movement.

By far the most conspicuous of these is residential segregation. In all of our cities, North or South, where the Negroes came in great numbers, they soon found themselves in separate residential areas. The attempt to establish legal boundaries and the effort on the part of the race to combat them is a part of the process. As the general outcome, the Negroes find themselves in possession of homes whose quality, convenience and appointments surpasses their fondest dreams of two decades ago. In most cities the Negroes are better housed than any other minor group of the American people. In the capital of the nation, they have over-run a territory of fully a square mile with as good residential facilities as the city affords. Indeed many of the principal streets and avenues leading to the public buildings and business sections of the city traverse the Negro section for as much as a running mile. In New York, they have the better favored residential section. In Chicago certain of the acquired streets and avenues are simply amazing in their magnificence.

There has been material improvement in the condition of the race in the South as a reflex of the Northern migration which in turn is due to the war. In every important community inter-racial committees have been organized devoted to the task of ameliorating the condition of the Negro.

The Race has gained tremendous potential power by virtue of the shift of population. In every great Northern city, the Negro holds the balance of power in closely contested elections. The city of Chicago has just elected a mayor who was largely sponsored by Negro voters. The race is gaining power in city boards of aldermen, in State legislatures, and also some effective voice in guiding the action of national legislators.

We might also attribute the new Negro newspaper to the outcome of the war. Prior to that time Negro journalism was but a feeble thermometer of the sentiment and feelings of the race. Their mechanical make-up was miserable, only to be surpassed in wretchedness by their literary features and inartisticity. Even race loving Negroes felt ashamed to be seen reading a Negro journal on the street cars or in public. This was generally characteristic of the colored press barring several well known exceptions. But now the exception has become the rule. Nearly every large center has a Negro paper which in mechanical make-up, literary form and artistic features rank not unfavorably with white journalism. The Negro is beginning to pay serious attention to his own press, which after all is the most effective voice of the people.

Strange to say, the war has not made the Negro more progressive and assertive of his rights as has been the case with all other suppressed races and classes in all parts of the world. Our militant organizations are, if anything, less radical than their ante-bellum prototypes. The N. A. A. C. P. while more efficient in method, is perhaps milder in spirit than the Afro-American League which preceded it. The Y. M. C. A. has not accentuated its militancy for racial rights. The Urban League is pursuing the wonted tenor of its way. Negro churches are certainly not more assertive, and in some ways seem more susceptible to the soothing balm of white overlordship than they were ten years ago. The radical magazines which sprung up like mushrooms just before the war have all but one passed out of existence. The Crisis has remained militant, but not radical. The Messenger alone holds the edge of radicalism. The Negro politicians are as conservative as Taft or Coolidge.

Dr. Locke has tried to convince us that the new Negro has arrived- but when we look for him we find he is mainly grinding out erotic literary output under sponsorship of the Jew. He does not yet display either the intellectual or volitional vigor to transform conditions or to bring new things to pass.

The best proof of the Negro's essentially conservative nature is seen in the fact that he hardly seems aware of the current of movement that is sweeping thru the world. The war has brought the race certain concrete advantages of incalculable value, but it has not touched his spirit or aroused his imagination.