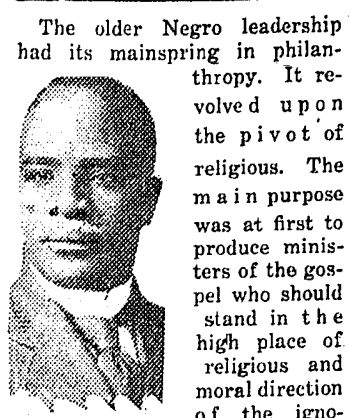


# The New Negro And The Higher Education

By KELLY MILLER



The older Negro leadership had its mainspring in philanthropy. It revolved upon the pivot of religious. The main purpose was at first to produce ministers of the gospel who should stand in the high place of religious and moral direction of the ignored masses. The motive was purely altruistic. The missionary can only give what he has. The Northern men and women who came South immediately after the war were religious enthusiasts. They looked upon the Negro as a great missionary field for religious and evangelistic effort. There was more joy in their heart when one Negro sinner confessed repentance than when ninety-nine learned a good lesson.

The old Negro leader was therefore motivated by religions as the chief means of redeeming his race, both in America and in Africa. The two continents were one and inseparable as furnishing the sphere of endeavor for the Negro convert and graduate. I wish to stop here to comment on the comprehensiveness of their wisdom which far surpasses that of our shortsighted present day policy. The race question can never be solved in America apart from the basic factor on the African continent. Race and color will be a stigma and a reproach as long as there remains that great reservoir of blackness, ignorance and degradation. So long as blackness remains as a badge of inferior qualities any where on the face of the earth, the African will share the stigma wherever he is to be found. The white race boasts of its superiority because wherever the white race is found it stands for a certain average of civilization and culture which ranges far above the level of that of other races and colors.

The old Negro leader was led to believe that equality with the white race, like the Kingdom of Heaven, was at hand. He felt that all that was necessary to do was to acquire the requisite education and advancement in cultural ways, and prejudice would speedily pass away. Upon the basis of this belief he hypothesized his whole program of procedure. The old political leader, like the early Christian believers, thought that the great consummation would come in their own day and generation before many then living should have tasted death. The political leaders believed, with an unshakable faith, that the Civil War Amendments would immediately be enforced. They sought to bring about national legislation to hasten the conclusion by legislative fiat.

The old Negro leadership believed more in man than in money. Little did it reckon on the economic factor as an element in race solution. Booker T. Washington brought in this essential doctrine, but was bitterly combatted by those who had been steeped in the more real doctrine of equity, justice and brotherhood. But the Hampton-Tuskegee philosophy did not essentially change the type or character of Negro leadership. It merely added a new factor. But hope and doctrine remained the same.

Then came the World War. A new order of things, it was thought, was to be ushered in. The Negro felt that he was to be the beneficiary of this new order. Democracy, and brotherhood became the watch word. High sounding phrases filled the ear. The lesser breeds of men believed that their day had come. But the Negro soon had a rude awakening. He found himself pushed backward rather than forward on the scale of brotherhood and equality. He began to re-examine the foundation of his former belief. He wished to be reassured of the faith that was in him. It was in the midst of this critical self examination that the new Negro was born. It does not yet appear just what he shall be. So far he has no definitely stated philosophy and no stated program. He hopes for a better day and a better way, but is impotent to find the means of effecting either. He notes the comparative failure of the older dispensation. Philanthropy has done much, but has not accomplished the great ends it aimed at in the beginning. Its great objectives have not been realized.

*The race problem in America is only a figment of the world race problem, declares, Dr. Kelly Miller, who sees the failure of any attempt to bring about an adjustment of race relations in America that does not comprehend the race problem in Africa. The new Negro must have a world vision that escapes the narrow confines of his immediate environment, adds Dr. Miller, who believes we must still look to higher education for the solution of all of our great national and human problems.*

*"The new Negro," asserts Dr. Miller, "lacks the religious conviction of the old leadership, and has nothing to take its place. In my view he is destined to lamentable failure until he strikes a deeper spiritual and moral note than which now seems to characterize his mood of mind and ways of thinking."*

Religious earnestness no longer obsesses the mind and haunts the soul of the Negro intelligentsia. A cold and painful religious indifference has supplanted the former zeal and enthusiasm. The first missionaries would be appalled could they revisit the schools and colleges which their faith founded and find such little faith still remaining. The spiritual and moral leadership of the race has not been recruited from the college and the university to the extent and degree which they hoped their endeavor would bring to pass. Equality between the races seems to recede as an ideal where they thought that they were in sight of the goal. Political and civil rights then thought to be secure have since slipped back to an amazing degree. Peace and good will which they prayed would come through progress and

righteousness now seems as far off as ever.

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He must needs develop the social instead of the selfish motive. Race must rise above self in mind and imagination. Above all things, he must be right and righteous in all the ends he aims at. He must not only be law-abiding, but alert about the righteous enforcement of righteous law.

The old Negro was chiefly concerned about himself and his problems. The new Negro must get a world mind and a world consciousness. Any group of people who limit their intellectual and emotional concern to their own problems will soon become cramped with in-growing pains. The Jews become specialists in every domain of human knowledge. But in every instance it roddowns to the honor and glory of the Jewish race. The Negro can not solve his little problems as it were in a corner. Our domestic race problem is but a part of the world wide issue of race adjustment. The Negro scholar is as important a fact in race solution as the worker in practical fields of endeavor. In deed the Negro press-controversalist must meet upon the field of the intellectual arena every form of scholarship and scientific acumen.

It was of curious interest to note the attitude of the Negro intelligentsia toward the Garvey Movement. In almost every instance the opposition condemned Marcus Garvey in terms of the most scathing condemnation, without evincing the slightest interest in the future of the mother continent. There was much of the half concealed conceit that insistence of including the dark continent in our racial program could only serve to defeat our insistence on race equality in America. I have just contributed an article on this subject which is shortly to appear in a British magazine. I take the position that the Negro question can never be settled in fragments. You cannot see the Japanese problem in California or in Hawaii until it is settled in Japan. The new Negro must interest himself in the universal Negro problem in both its American and African aspects.