

praises of the Negro, the news and reports concerning him occupy the front page, are, in the majority of cases, biased, discreditable, and heartrending.

Who is foolish enough to assume that with 239,000 colored men in uniform from the Southern states alone, as against 370,000 white men, the blacks whose manhood and patriotism were thus recognized and tested are forever to be flogged, lynched, burned at the stake, and chased into concealment whenever Caucasian desperadoes are moved to engage in these infamous pastimes?

It is a dreadful thing to see a man of ideals and principles desert them and reveal his traitorous soul to public scorn and contempt, in order that he may serve a master.



25. "Our Larger Duty," *New Negro* 3 (August 1919): 5, reprinted in *When Africa Awakes*, 100–104.

In the first issue of the *New Negro* that he edited, Harrison indicated the importance that internationalism played in his worldview. In "Our Larger Duty," he emphasized that "before the Negroes of the Western world can play any effective part they must first acquaint themselves with what is taking place in the larger world whose millions are in motion." He explained that the "superior[ity]" of the white race was due to "its control of the physical force of the world—ships, guns, soldiers, money and other resources," not to anything innate. Harrison also put forth the view that the "cant of 'democracy'" was "intended as dust in the eyes of white voters" and that "as long as the Color Line exists, all the perfumed protestations of Democracy on the part of the white race" were "simply downright lying." Harrison saw the lack of democracy and the "similarity of suffering on the part of colored folk" throughout the world as giving rise to an international revolutionary ferment.¹⁸

The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the Color Line. But what is the Color Line? It is the practice of the theory that the colored and "weaker" races of the earth shall not be free to follow "their own way of life and of allegiance," but shall live, work and be governed after such fashion as the dominant white race may decide. Consider for a moment the full meaning of this fact. Of the seventeen hundred million people that dwell on our earth today more than twelve hundred million are colored—black and brown and yellow. The so-called white race is, of course, the superior race. That is to say, it is on top by virtue of its control of the physical force of the world—ships, guns, soldiers, money and other resources. By virtue of this control England rules and robs India, Egypt, Africa and the West Indies; by virtue of this control we of the United States can tell Haytians, Hawaiians, Filipinos, and Virgin Islanders how much they shall get for their labor and what shall be done in their lands; by virtue of this control Belgium can still say to the Congolese whether they shall have their hands hacked off or their eyes gouged out—and all without any reference to what Africans, Asiatics or other inferior members of the world's majority may want.

It is thus clear that, as long as the Color Line exists, all the perfumed protestations of Democracy on the part of the white race must be simply downright lying. The cant of "Democracy" is intended as dust in the eyes of white voters, incense on the alter of their own self-love. It furnishes bait for the clever statesmen who hold the destinies of their people in their hands when they go fishing for suckers in the waters of public discussion. But it becomes more and more apparent that Hindus, Egyptians, Africans, Chinese and Haytians have taken the measure of this cant and hypocrisy. And, whatever the white world may think, it will have these peoples to deal with during the twentieth century.

In dealing with them in the past it has been considered sufficient that the white man should listen to his own voice alone in determining what colored peoples should have; and he has, therefore, been trying perpetually to "solve" the problems arising from his own assumptions of the role of God. The first and still the simplest method was to kill them off, either by slaughter pure and simple, as in the case of the American Indians and the Congo natives, or by forcibly changing their mode of life, as was done by the pious prudes who killed off the Tasmanians; or by importing among them rum, guns, whiskey and consumption, as has been attempted in the case of the Negroes of Africa and North America. But unlike the red Indians and Tasmanians, most of these subject peoples have refused to be killed off. Their vitality is too strong.

The later method derives itself into internal and external treatment. The internal treatment consists of making them work, to develop the resources of their ancestral lands, not for themselves, but for their white over-lords, so that the national and imperial coffers may be filled to overflowing, while the Hindu ryot, on six cents a day, lives down to the level of the imperialist formula:

"The poor benighted Hindoo,
He does the best he kin do;
He never aches
For chops and steaks
And for clothes he makes his skin do."

The external treatment consists of girdling them with forts and battleships and holding armies in readiness to fly at their throats upon the least sign of "uppishness" or "impudence."

Now this similarity of suffering on the part of colored folk has given, and is giving, rise to a certain similarity of sentiment. Egypt has produced the Young Egypt movement; India, the Swadesha, the All-India Congress, and the present revolutionary movement which has lit the fuse of the powder-keg on which Britain sits in India today; Africa has her Ethiopian Movement which ranges from the Zulus and Hottentots of the Cape to the Ekoi of Nigeria; in short, the darker races, chafing under the domination of the alien whites, are everywhere showing a disposition to take Democracy at its word and to win some measure of it—for themselves.

What part in this great drama of the future are the Negroes of the Western world to play? The answer is on the knees of the gods, who often make hash of the predictions of men. But it is safe to say that, before the Negroes of the Western World can play any effective part they must first acquaint themselves with what is taking place in the larger world whose millions are in motion. They must keep well informed of the trend of that motion and of its range and possibilities. If our problem here is really a part of a great world-wide problem, we must make our attempts to solve our part [and] link up with the attempts being made elsewhere to solve the other parts. So will we profit by a wider experience and perhaps be able to lend some assistance to that ancient Mother Land of ours to whom we may fittingly apply the words of Milton:

"Methinks I see in my mind a mighty and puissant nation, rousing herself like a strong man after sleep and shaking her invincible locks; methinks I see her like an eagle mewing her mighty youth and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full noon-day beam; methinks I see her scaling and improving her sight at the fountain itself of heavenly radiance, while the whole noise of timorous and flocking birds—with them also that love the twilight—hover around, amazed at what she means, and in their useless gabble would prognosticate a year of sects and schisms."



26. "The Need for It [and The Nature of It]," *New Negro* 4, no. 1
(September 1919): 1.

The September 1919 issue of the *New Negro* provided a fuller editorial statement of the magazine's purpose and scope. This lead editorial by Harrison discussed why "Negro-Americans" needed to develop "racial consciousness," understand world events, and have a publication which served their interests.

The meeting and mingling of the darker peoples on the plains of France under stress of war has served to bring more clearly before the minds of Negro-Americans these three things:

- (1) The need and value of extending racial consciousness beyond the bounds of the white countries in which we find ourselves.
- (2) That the basis of such extension must be found in a common current knowledge of the facts and happenings of the international world, especially in so far as they affect the status and welfare of the darker races and of subject peoples everywhere.
- (3) That, as a people, we Negro Americans need to know and understand events and their trend; we need a publication which will not only chronicle events of world-importance, but will also interpret them for us in the light of our own race's intents and aims, and keeps us at the same time in touch with the interpretation put on these world events by the controlling culture of the white world.