

REPORT FROM THE DEEP SOUTH

New Negro Self-Respect is Confusing to Race-Haters

BY MARTY RICHARDSON

The situation in the South for its Negro population. It is definitely bad right now, and threatens to become considerably worse before it becomes permanently better. But the white race-haters of the South are finding out one salient—and to them disturbing—fact: it's a brand new Negro that they are now persecuting.

The old Negro is a thing of the past. Not eliminated entirely, of course. But the old days when, as soon as a small handful of Negroes tried to stand up for their rights the Grand Master of the Masons and the head of the colored insurance company and the frock-coated minister would hasten downtown to 'apologize' for them—those days are gone forever.

Jacksonville in Florida is a good case in point. Within the past while this city's Negroes have shown in varied ways that they are 'new' Negroes, and have no intentions of returning to the old ways of the past.

Jacksonville is one of the 'Hard' towns of Florida. Not the worst in the state, but infinitely behind Miami Beach, Pensacola, Daytona and other towns.

Now a Strong Force

But the Negroes in Jacksonville fought for, and won, the right to vote in Democratic elections a few years ago. They now are a strong force in the Democratic party, as well as quite noticeable in the nearlily-white Florida GOP ranks.

Last Thursday one Gen. Sumpter L. Lowery of Tampa, who once posed as a 'liberal friend of the Negro' (until integration forced him to show his real feelings) addressed the Duval County Democratic Committee meeting.

"The NAACP is a loud-mouthed trouble-making organization," Lowery shouted. "This whole integration idea is a dream of the Communists. They don't want to get

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Negro Self-Respect

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Negroes into our schools; they want to mix our blood with Negro blood."

Departure Is Timed

The Negro delegates to the important party-leaders' meeting sat in perfect silence. Then a barbecue-chain owner named Singleton, spokesman for the colored group, politely asked the chairman "Is the business session of the meeting completed?"

Told that it was, Singleton then said "Mr. Chairman, my delegation and myself refuse to sit here any longer and be insulted by the vulgar remarks of this speaker. We refuse to remain for the social half of the evening." And the 23 Negroes, every one of them, got up and in absolute dignity walked out.

They had outguessed the race-haters. Lowery and his clique had hoped to anger them, make them 'bolt' the party, and their 23 important districts would have fallen into white hands.

Haters Out-Maneuvered

Singleton and his group had outguessed them; they could not be censured for leaving, because the business was finished. But the important part of the session, the meeting with Party candidates and mapping plans for the coming election, was scornfully passed up by the colored delegates. Now the Party will have to woo them all over again—and Singleton said "They are going to make us concessions, too."

First of the concessions that the Negroes say they will demand will be the immediate resignation of the County chairman. When he was bitterly opposed for the job earlier, it was the solid Negro vote which won for him. Now they ask "Why didn't he stop Lowery? Because he believes as Lowery does. We will demand a new man in the spot."

Has Many Officers

Just in case you think these are idle boasts, be advised that Jacksonville, which once had the toughest white cops in the South, now has 26 Negro policemen, doing a grand job eliminating crime.

Because of their opposition to the 'wrong' kind of school officials, the city now has the finest and newest Negro public schools of any Southern city.

And this will interest you: large advertisements in the colored newspapers advise Negroes to "Be Politically Alert; get ready now to vote for judges who do NOT call you 'N——r' in their courts; who do not belittle your lawyers, and do not treat you as an animal when you appear before them."

That's the new Negro with whom the race-haters in one southern city have to deal. It is typical of Montgomery in Alabama, Birmingham, Atlanta and a number of other southern communities.

The chances are good that this new self-respect of a race will spread much faster than the terror and oppression of the hate-spreading Citizens' Councils, no matter how fast they set them up.