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The Negro in the Three Americas*

ALAIN L. LOCKE

It seems fitting that our final consideration of the Negro in American life should be set in the broadest possible perspective, and so I propose as our final subject, *The Negro in the Three Americas*. Even should we discover no further common denominators—though I think we shall—there will be at least two of great contemporary concern and importance,—Pan-Americanism and democracy, with both of which the general situation of the American Negro has, as we shall try to show, some vital and constructive connection. Our opening lecture, indeed, suggested that the furtherance of democracy in this Western hemisphere was bound up crucially with basic social and cultural policies upon which Negro life and its problems had direct bearing. It is incumbent upon us to justify such statements.

* This paper is the original English text of the concluding lecture—"The Negro in the Three Americas," from a series of six public lectures on *The Rôle of the Negro in the American Culture* delivered in Haiti last Spring by Dr. Alain Locke, Professor of Philosophy at Howard University, on leave as Exchange Professor to Haiti under the joint auspices of the American Committee for Inter-American Artistic and Intellectual Relations and the Haitian Ministry of Education. The lectures were delivered in Port au Prince during May in the Aula of the School of Law under the sponsorship of the Council of The University of Haiti, the inaugural lecture under the patronage of President Elie Lescot, and were repeated in part at Cap Haitien at the Lycee Phillipe Guerrier and the Salle Municipale. They have recently been published, as delivered, in a French edition of 2,000 copies by l'Imprimerie de l'Etat, Port au Prince, 1943 (pp. 141) under the title: *Le Rôle du Nègre dans la Culture des Ameriques*. At the conclusion of his stay in Haiti, Professor Locke was decorated by President Lescot with the National Order of Honor and Merit, grade of Commandeur.

But before coming to the discussion either of theory or policies, let us first consider facts. In the United States of North America, we are well aware, sometimes painfully so, that the very presence of a Negro population of nearly ten per cent of the total population constitutes a race problem of considerable proportions. I am aware, of course, that under an Anglo-Saxon regime of race relations ten per cent may constitute, indeed does constitute, more of an active problem than a considerably larger population ratio would generate under the more tolerant Latin code of race which culturally predominates in Central and South America. However, what may show up very clearly on the surface of our North American society as a race problem may to a degree also be present under the surface of large areas of Latin-American society as a class problem, as we shall later see. At any rate, as to the facts, a larger proportion of the Caribbean and South American populations is of Negro racial stock than even our North American ten per cent. On a mass statistical average, by conservative estimates, the Negro population ratio of the Western hemisphere, the U.S.A. included, is 14 per cent, and the closer we come to the mid-zone of the hemisphere the higher that proportion becomes. For the Caribbean or West Indian islands, it is 46 per cent, for Brazil it is estimated at the lowest as 28 per cent, by some as high as 36 per cent. Columbia is more than one-sixth Negro, Ecuador fourteen and Venezuela more than eight per cent.

The Central American republics, except Costa Rica, have their considerable Negro admixtures, Panama especially. Indeed of all the American nations, only Chile, the Argentine and Canada can be said to have a negligible concern in this particular issue of race relations. Indeed when we superimpose the figures of the Indian population—so considerable an element in all Central and South American countries—and then the large East Indian or Hindu populations of Trinidad and British Guiana, we begin to realize and appreciate more the polyracial character of our Continent and the fact that this phase of human group relations is more crucial and critical in our inter-Continental life and its progressive development than in even our respective national societies.

Fortunately, although different specific measures may be required, the same basic attitudes and principles of fully democratic living will resolve any of these problems, one as well as the other. They have different numerators and degrees in color differentials, but they have a common denominator of arbitrarily limited and unfulfilled cultural and economic democracy. Certainly for such a population situation, whether it be upon the basis of caste or of class, a hegemony of white or even the fairer elements of the population cannot be made to spell real or effective democracy. Nor can the group attitudes involved be forged into any really unified and durable hemispheric solidarity. It is in this way, to anticipate our analysis somewhat, that these matters condition Pan-Americanism almost as critically as they limit expanding democracy.

It is the common historic denominator of slavery which despite all other

differences of national culture and social structure has determined both the similarity of condition and the basic identity of the problems which still so seriously affect the Negro population groups of the American hemisphere. For they are all the cultural consequences and economic aftermath of slavery, and like slavery itself they must eventually be completely liquidated just as that institution was itself abolished. Slavery in America was, of course, eliminated at different times and in quite different ways: here in Haiti, that came about by means of a slave rebellion; with us in the United States, it was Civil War; in still other American nations the process was legal emancipation, in some cases gradual, in others, immediate. But the lives of most persons of Negro blood and descent in America directly or indirectly, in one fashion or another or one degree or another are still seriously affected by the cultural, social and economic consequences of slavery. By an approximate estimate this involves at least 35 millions of human beings among the total American population of 266 millions, among these the 13 million Negroes of the United States, the 12 or more million Negroes in Brazil and the 8 or more million Negroes of the Caribbean.

To be sure, a considerable and an encouraging number of these Negroes have already attained the average level of cultural status, and a certain few have raised themselves considerably above the average levels of their respective cultures. But it should be clearly recognized that so long as the masses of these Negro groups comprise, even in part as a consequence of slavery so heavy a percentage of those who are illiterate, undernour-

ished, ill-housed, underprivileged and in one way or another subject to social discrimination, just so long will it be necessary to give serious consideration both to the special causes and the specific remedies of such conditions, and to take stock, as well, of the undemocratic social attitudes and the anti-democratic social policies which invariably accompany these conditions.

Having now before us the fundamental historical reasons why so large a proportion of American Negroes enjoy less than their proper share of democracy, whether we take stock of the situation in Baltimore or Bahia, in São Paulo or in San Antonio, let us consider some basic common reasons why they must eventually share more fully and equitably in democracy's benefits than they do at present. The reasons which we have in mind to consider are not the uncontested and incontestable arguments of moral principle and abstract justice—important as these may be—but certain very particular and realistic reasons which it seems wise and opportune to stress at this critical hour of human history and social development. Doing so concretely, and on a hemispheric rather than a narrow nationalistic basis may re-enforce their timeliness and urgency. One nation cannot directly solve the other's problems, but certain important international dimensions have lately come into the general area of these problems which should prove mutually reenforcing and helpful. It is profitable also to see the Negro position and its claims in the same perspective.

In the first place, in everyone of the countries where he constitutes a considerable proportion of the population, the Negro represents a conspicuous in-

dex by which the practical efficiency and integrity of that particular country's democracy can readily be gauged and judged. For the same high visibility which internally makes possible ready discrimination against Negroes makes the domestic practices of race externally all the more conspicuous and observable in the enlarging spotlight of international relations. However fundamental the domestic issues of race may be, today and for the future we must all be particularly concerned about their international consequences. This holds in general on a world scale. Here the American treatment of the Negro can have and already has had serious repercussions on enlightened Asiatic and African public opinion and confidence. Or, for that matter, so will our treatment of any racial minority such as the treatment of the American segments of the Hindu or the Chinese resident among us. But this situation holds with intensified force as between the Americas and with particular reference to the widely distributed American groups of Negro and mixed Negro descent. For historical and inescapable reasons, the Negro has thus become a basic part and a conspicuous symbol of the cause of democracy in our Western hemisphere.

For the United States, especially interested in and committed to a program of broader and closer Caribbean cooperation as well as to a thoroughgoing furtherance of Pan-American solidarity, the foreign frontier of race, so to speak, has become more critical even than the domestic. Fortunately this is being seen and realized with increasing force and frequency by enlightened liberal opinion in the United States. Far-sighted statesmen and pro-

gressive race leaders alike realize that sounder and more consistently democratic practices of race at home are necessary for the successful prosecution of these important foreign programs and essential as well to complete conviction and moral confidence in our democratic professions and intentions. The "*Good Neighbor*" policy has worked a miracle of political and economic rapprochement between the Americas, but democratic race equality and fraternity, as its morally inescapable corollaries are practically necessary reinforcements of the "*Good Neighbor*" policy and principle.

This situation, as an acute observer has recently stated, is not altogether unilateral. Latin America has its part to play in the developing American democracy of race. This observer, my colleague, Dr. E. Franklin Frazier, has this penetrating view of the situation to offer on return from a year's study and observation of the Caribbean and Latin America. Although he finds that the race barrier to American solidarity stands to the credit side of the more favorable and democratic character of the typical Latin attitudes toward race, he also observes that Latin America has her important part to play in the achievement of racial democracy. "Differences between North and Latin America," he says, "in their attitudes toward race constitute one of the real barriers to American solidarity. This is a question that has not been faced frankly in most discussions of Pan-Americanism. "But," continues Dr. Frazier, "one might add that on the part of Latin Americans as well as of North Americans there has been a tendency to evade the issue, though their conflicting attitudes toward racial mix-

ture are the basis of a real distrust and lack of mutual respect. In their dealings with North Americans, our Latin neighbors have often been careful not to offend our feelings with regard to color caste. This has been facilitated by the fact that the ruling classes, with some few exceptions, have been of predominantly light complexion. But (and I stress this but), as the masses of these countries begin to rise and as there is greater intercourse between the Latin-American countries and North America, such evasions in the long run will be impossible."

Professor Frazier has put his finger on the crux of the issue, but in a practical and constructive as well as acutely diagnostic way. For if at times class differentiation and its prejudices have contrived to aid and abet outright color caste prejudice, there is the obvious necessity of reenforcing democracy from both sides of this as yet admittedly unsolved social and cultural situation. The situation on either side needs and ultimately must undergo considerable democratizing. Almost all America, one way or the other and to one degree or another, suffers yet from the unhappy consequences of slavery, which in one situation has left us an undemocratic problem of class and in another, an even less democratic situation of color caste. We shall discuss this situation again a little further on, but it is worthwhile in passing to note the disastrous negation of democracy possible if, by way of the shortcomings of democracy either in the South or the North, fascism and its attendant racism should gain firm rootage in American soil. For then, as has been said already, racial and minority disabilities will have become a majority predicament and a

general democratic catastrophe.

We must now hurry on, since ours in the constructive motive and interest, to sketch what favorable cultural trends are today coming to the aid of the cause of race democracy. But since slavery is the common root of our present difficulties, North as well as South, and in the Caribbean most especially, let us take one final backward glimpse at slavery itself in its most fundamental relationship to the whole American social scene. In the first place, it is salutary to recall that it was only historical accident that a white indentured servant class did not bear the brunt of the labor load of the European settlement of this continent, and thus become the victims, if not of slavery, certainly of its close equivalent. One need only remember the indentured servants, the convict debtors of the early United States colonies or the Jamaican Irish similarly imported as a laboring caste. However, through slavery and the slave trade, this hard fortune but constructive contribution fell to the lot of the Negro. In so doing slavery did two peculiar and significant things which have determined the course of American history and influenced the character of American civilization: *first*, American Slavery, since it was of the domestic variety, planted the Negro in the very core of the dominant white civilization, permitting not only its rapid assimilation by the Negro but its being, in turn, deeply and continuously counter-influenced culturally by the Negro; and *second*, it also planted the Negro—and that holds true for today as well as for the past, at the moral and political core of a basically democratic society, so that around him and his condition

wherever there are undemocratic inconsistencies, must center the whole society's struggle for the full and continuous development of freedom.

As we shall more and more realize, the extension of American democracy must involve the reversal and eradication of these historical consequences of slavery, and it is more than appropriate, indeed it is morally inevitable that an historical American ill should have, in the long run, a typical and successful American cure. This is what I was thinking forward to when I said in the third lecture of this series that the majority stakes in the solution of the American race problem were nearly as great as the Negro minority's, and in the first lecture hinted that it would appear that the cause of the American Negro still had a constructive contribution to make to our current crusade for democracy.

We now come to some concluding considerations of ways and means. Especially important, it seems, are cultural developments, since they throw bridges of understanding and sympathy over the crevasses of the slow filling in of social reform and the still slower upbuilding of economic progress. They are essential, too, to the right and ready understanding of whatever group progress is being made along any other line. For some time now, undoubtedly, we have been aware of great Negro progress in our respective national areas, and have been taking national stock and pride in it. Now however, it seems high time to become more aware of it, as of other aspects of our American life, in an inter-American perspective.

All along it has been the tragedy of Negro talent and accomplishment to be considered and discounted in its

full meaning as a matter of exception. It is only when added up and dramatically collated that its proper significance is arrived at and its legitimate social effect brought to full realization. The cultural achievements and contributions of American Negroes, startling enough within their national boundaries, are from the approach of the whole hemisphere more than trebly inspiring and reassuring. In 1818 a French libertarian, Abbé Gregoire, inspired incidentally in great part by the galaxy of Haitian heroes of your Wars for Independence, wrote a small book on *De la litterature des Noirs*, which proved one of the most influential documents of the anti-slavery campaign. For to the conviction of the Negro's moral right to freedom, it added in intellectual circles, the demonstration that he had the capacity to fully use freedom's advantages. For so, in their brief day and as exceptions, these cases had previously been dismissed after the customary nine days' wonderment. But Gregoire added up a convincing total when he placed beside Toussaint L'Ouverture and Phyllis Wheatley and Benjamin Banneker, the Maryland inventor, mathematician and almanac maker of Jefferson's day, the lesser known figures of Juan Latino, the 16th century Spanish African poet, Pareja and Gomez, the Negro painter-apprentices of Velasquez and Murillo, Capitein, the Dutch African theologian, Gustavus Vassa, the English African essayist. Together they were convincing justification of the Negro's possibilities and rights.

Though needing, let us hope, no such extreme conversion today, the intelligent and forward thinking public of the Americas needs reenforcing

evidence of the present cultural attainments and growing cultural influence of the American Negro. It must come, too, with that overwhelming effect that can only derive from corroborative evidence from every quarter and from every one of the American nations having any considerable Negro contingent. Certainly such evidence is rapidly coming in, and it seems to reflect only our naturally limited information if such cultural progress seems to be more developed in North or South or Mid-America. Someday, and as soon as possible, it is to be hoped the general record will be compiled in its hemispheric rather than just a narrow nationalistic scope. Someday, too, and as soon after the conclusion of the war as possible, it is also to be hoped that inter-American exhibits and visits will make wider known and reciprocally appreciated the contemporary personalities and contributions of this cultural advance of the various contingents of American Negro life.

Here only in barest outline can we begin to indicate them. But even that should prove enlightening and stimulating. Again, but this time on an inter-American scale, let us glance briefly at the Negro in music, art, folklore, literature and social leadership. Surprise is in store for any persistent student of the subject: I vividly recall my own, even after some years of reading, when I received unexpectedly the two volume study of Ildefonso Pereda Valdez of Uruguay on the influence of the Negro in the Plata Valley region, and again when Captain Romero turned up in Washington under the auspices of the Division of Cultural Relations of our State Department as an interested authority on the

Negro in Peru.

To commence we may quote from a passage of Manuel Gonzalez, a statement that could easily be generalized to include also much of the Caribbean: "In Brazil, Cuba, Venezuela and other tropical localities, the Negro is the preponderant non-European race. The Negro is here, it is true, being slowly absorbed, but his deep inroads in the culture of these countries are today tantamount to a national characteristic and will persist for many generations to come."

In music, paralleling the North American developments with which we are now already familiar, there are, of course, those rich Negro contributions of Brazil, Cuba, Trinidad and the French Antilles. Blending with Spanish, French and Portuguese elements, they have produced an extraordinary crop both of folk and sophisticated American music. First, we encounter pure or almost pure African folk forms, manifested in rhythmic forms accompanied by percussion instruments or drums only. Then came what Gonzalez calls "the mulatto expression"—the hybrid "Creole" forms which are mostly of popular appeal and significance, diverting and useful as he says in the widespread service of dance and popular music. In this field today the outstanding creator is the Cuban, Ernesto Lecuona, a close analogue of our North American Gershwin. Finally we have what for the future is perhaps most important, the symphonic developments based on Negro motives and rhythms, but harmonized and orchestrated with all the skill of the modern European tradition. Here, it is hard to say whether Brazil or Cuba is outstanding, for in the one we have the important work of

Villa Lobos, Fernandez, and Reveltas while in Cuba we have Amadeo Roldan, Caturla, Pedro Sanjuan and perhaps greatest of all, Gilberto Valdes. The Brazilian group combines Indian and Negro sources, but the Cuban work reflects, of course, predominantly Negro idioms. Indeed some think that serious Afro-Cuban music is one of the most promising strands of our whole contemporary American musical development, and it certainly would have already been so but for the untimely deaths of Roldan and Caturla. Most of these composers cannot, of course, be claimed as Negroes, though several have mixed ancestral strains. That is not, indeed, the emphasis of our discussion: we are speaking primarily of the power and influence of the Negro materials. However, the situation does from time to time also yield a great Negro musician, like Gomez, or the Jamaican Reginald Forsythe, or one of the present musical lights of London, the Guiana Negro composer-conductor, Rudolph Dunbar. Add to this considerable accomplishment that of the North American Negro, and one has some idea of this incontestable domination for several generations both of American popular and serious music by Negro musical elements.

The situation in the field of art is also most interesting and promising. In the States we have undoubtedly among sculptors of front rank, Richmond Barthé, and of second magnitude Henry Bannarn and William Artis. The Cuban Negro, Theodoro Ramos-Blanco, is by general agreement one of Cuba's leading contemporary sculptors as is also his mulatto colleague, Florencio Gelabert. Professor of sculpture at the Havana School

of Fine Arts, Ramos-Blanco is known both for his strong delineations of peasant and Negro themes and for his happy memorializations of Cuban heroes, among them his famous statue to the great patriot Maceo. Before an untimely death, Alberto Peña shared acclaim with Ramon Loy—companion figures in the sphere of Cuban painting. Indeed we may expect much of the development of the Negro subject and theme in Latin American art, whether it realizes itself in terms of the Negro artist or not. For already in Mexico, Rivera and Orosco have considerably emphasized the theme as has also Portinari, perhaps Brazil's leading painter. Gone completely, under the wide influence of these artists, is the over-Europeanization of sculpture and painting in progressive art circles in Latin America, and that automatically means the glorification of the indigenous types and instead of cosmopolitan emphasis, the people's norms of beauty. In countries where the classical tradition still hangs on, and where the native artists are convention-bound and timid, as once indeed were the North American Negro artists, that subject matter hold-back may be expected slowly to disappear. With it always comes a freeing of technique and stronger and maturer accents of self-expression. Under the double leadership of North American and Mexican art that cultural revolution has already begun, and an art truly expressive of the polyracial elements in Latin-America, the Negro among them, may shortly be expected to show the effects of such influence.

It is in the field of letters that the Negro contribution has most generally expressed its unusual force in the Antilles and Latin America. Haiti,

with its high and almost continuous tradition of authorship in *belles lettres*, with its successive schools of poets, usually far above provincial calibre and reputation, hardly needs to be told about this. Yet few of us, if any, realize the range and extent of the Negro's literary influence throughout the hemisphere, if for no other reason than the limited view imposed by four different major languages. But the record is formidable when we add up the Haitian, Cuban, Brazilian and North American contributions. Pereira Valdes *Anthology of Negro American Poetry* adds even an Argentinian Eusebio Cardozo and a Casildo Thompson and the Uruguayan Polar Barrios and Carlos Ferreira. Most general readers do know of Brazil's leading contemporary novelist, Mario de Andrade, and can also name such first magnitude Brazilian writers as the poet and abolitionist, Luis Gama, Manuel Alvarenga, Tobias Barreto, one of Brazil's greatest poets, Cruz e Sousa and Machado de Assis, founder of realism in Brazilian literature. We need only in passing mention the brilliant North American contingent of Paul Laurence Dunbar, James Weldon Johnson, Countee Cullen, Langston Hughes, Dr. DuBois and Richard Wright, to mention only the first-line representatives. And when we come to Cuban literature, only a book like Guirao's *Anthology of Afro-Cuban Poesie* will reveal the wide extent of the racial influence on both popular and academic poetry. But in addition, one has to take into account in the history of Cuban letters, Gabriel Valdes, better known as "Placido," Manzano, and especially the contemporary literary genius of Nicholas Guillen. With Marcelino Arozarena

and Regino Pedroso, the almost dominates the present output of Cuban verse of distinction; surely, if we consider that the movement of folklorist expression is the product of the initiative and labor of these three Metizos. And then comes *Canapé Vert*¹ to swell the ranks of this growing current trend of literary interest and emphasis.

Nor has this creative literary expression lacked for critical support and backing. For years now in Brazil, Arthur Ramos and Gilberto Freyre have been issuing their scholarly studies of the Negro historical and cultural backgrounds, and similarly since 1906 in Cuba that tireless champion of Negro culture in Cuba's history and folklore—Fernando Ortiz, founder of the Society of Afro-Cuban Studies. For many of these years, too, Dr. Ortiz has been promoting an even more important project—the closer relation of Afro-Brazilian and the Afro-Cuban studies. In this way, then, the new American criticism is actively promoting the appreciation of the indigenous aspects of our American culture, Indian as well as Negro, and laying the foundation for a much more democratic cultural outlook.

Best of all, Cuba and Mexico have both marshaled the reforms of their educational systems behind this movement, to the extent that in addition to a policy of wider public education, they admit the right of the people's culture to a recognized place in the program of studies. From such trends the various folk cultures must inevitably find greater representation in literature and the arts. So, if the folk yields have been as considerable as they have already been in spite of the

discouragement of official philosophies of culture unfavorable to them, now that these policies have been reversed in their favor, they are doubly assured of enhanced influence and prestige.

Another factor needs, finally, to be noted. The cultural traffic that in the past has run so steadily from all our respective capitals back and forth to Europe now has swung around to a continental axis North and South. In these cultural interchanges, the native folk products and their representatives must be expected to play an increasingly important part. They are both more interesting, distinctive, and novel and, from the democratic viewpoint, more representative of the majority of the people. By the traditional exchanges in terms of the stereotyped European models, we got only to know our outstanding artists as individual talents; now if they come bringing the folk culture, we shall, in addition, really for the first time be able to foster sound international and interracial understanding. And I cannot emphasize too strongly that these interchanges must be interracial as well as international, if they are to bring about the calculated democratic result. Elsie Houston and Olga Coehlo, for example, have really brought Brazil to New York in bringing their marvelous renditions of the Afro-Brazilian folk-songs: almost for the first time, do we feel that we have sampled the distinctive flavor of the national culture. Marian Anderson at this moment is making her first Mexican tour, another happy augury. And certainly one of the greatest needs in the situation is the one we have been prosecuting together so pleasantly and helpfully, for Haitian-American rapprochement is both an interracial as

¹The Pan-American prize novel by the Freres Thoby-Marcelin for 1943.

well as international undertaking, happily so—not only for the two nations concerned, but for enlarging the democracy of the American mind throughout the entire American continent.

We might, indeed, close on this point of the radiant prospects for inter-American cultural democracy, but for a final, and let us say at the outset, more problematic point. Here, we must ask ourselves, finally, that other important question—what are the prospects for larger social democracy? Surely no one will claim that democracy can be complete or fully satisfactory without it!

Here the realism of the situation forces us to admit that unlike our cultural differences, which may even attract, our differences of social culture really do, in most instances, seriously divide. We know full well that there are great differences between the Anglo-Saxon and the Latin codes of race and the social institutions and customs founded on each. Not only do we have this as a matter of divergence between the Northern and the Southern segments of the hemisphere, but in the West Indies, we have these divergent traditions facing each other across the narrow strips of the Caribbean. But let us face the facts. Is there any way of looking at these differences constructively? Can we in any way relate them for the constructive reinforcement of democracy in America? At least, let us try.

The Latin tradition of race has, certainly, a happy freedom from *a priori* prejudice, looking at the individual first, and conceding him as an individual a reasonably fair chance. Triple heritage of the French Revolution, of Catholic universalism, and of

Latin social tolerance, this is surely a basic democratic trait. The early and outstanding accomplishments of individual Negroes and their ready acceptance according to merit in Latin-American societies could never have taken place except on this foundation.

On the other hand, it is equally evident that the Anglo-Saxon code of race does base itself on *a priori* prejudice, and really, as the term itself indicates, pre-judges the individual on the arbitrary basis of the mass status of his group. It makes its exceptions grudgingly and as exceptions, and often cruelly forces the advancing segments of the group back to the level and limitations of the less advanced. Certainly no one would say it was justifiable either in principle or practice, no one that is, who believes basically in democracy. Nor can one say that it is democratic in intention: far from it.

However—and here I ask your patience for a moment—not as an apologist, God forbid, but as a philosopher, this hard code has had some unintended democratic consequences. In forcing the advance-guard of a people back upon the people, it has out of the discipline of solidarity forged mass organization for group progress. The successful individual in the majority of cases, still linked to the common lot, is not an *élite* released and removed from the condition of the rest of his people, but becomes as he advances an advance-guard threading through an increasingly coherent mass following. I am not condoning the circumstances which have brought this fact about; I repeat, I am merely describing objectively what has historically transpired.

Now let us put these separate pictures stereoptically together, to see if

we can get a more three-dimensional view both of the situation and its prospects. The Latin-American code of race does more justice and offers less harm to the individual, but at the historical price of an unhappy divorce of the *élite* from the masses. The Anglo-Saxon practise of race seriously handicaps the individual and his chances for immediate progress, but forges, despite intentions to the contrary, a binding bond of group solidarity, an inevitable responsibility of the *élite* for the masses, a necessary though painful condition for mass progress. From the practical point of view, the more liberal tradition concedes but divides, while the other refuses to concede piecemeal, but by unifying, cannot possibly in the long run divide and conquer. This seems paradoxical, and is. But for one further moment, let us look at the history of the matter.

Both of these social policies of race, the Latin as well as the Anglo-Saxon, were laid down by slave-owning societies before the abolition of slavery. One saw in the more favorable condition and freedom of the mulatto a menacing advance that must be arbitrarily blocked by a solid wall of prejudice. The other for the most part, saw in the differential treatment of the *mestizo* the strategy of a buffer class, granting it considerably more than was allowed the blacks but always somewhat less than was standard for the privileged whites. Neither was democratic in intention or in the long run in basic historical effect. One produced an out-and-out race problem, the other, a tangential conversion of a large part of it into a class problem. Each respective group experience has something to teach, and the first common lesson is that you cannot expect

to get democracy out of slavery or the institutional inheritances of slavery. We shall get along further and faster by the realization that democracy, as it must fully develop in America, cannot be developed either within the arbitrary and undemocratic traditions of color caste or fully within the less arbitrary but still undemocratic system of a racial *élite* split off, largely on the basis of a color class, from the race proletariat. Neither of these social race patterns of society is blameless, and to be fully democratic each needs radical improvement.

Obvious common sense teaches us that we shall only achieve fuller democracy in practise by democratizing further whichever system we have by historical accident inherited. However, in these days of international intercourse and collaboration, there are just as obviously mutual lessons which can be constructively learned and applied. One system, the Latin, has vindicated a basic essential of social democracy—the open career for talent and unhampered mobility and recognition for rising individual achievement. The other, the Anglo-Saxon, has taught an increasingly important essential of a democratic social order—the responsibility of the *élite* for the masses. The basic necessity of the latter, even within the Latin-American framework has been distinctly corroborated by the organization in 1931 in Brazil—a country where there is almost no race problem as far as the individual is concerned, of a *National Union of Men of Color* for the improvement of the well-being of the Negro mass population. It is this organization, which sponsored the notable Second Afro-Brazilian Congress in 1937, and which, incidentally, in 1941-42 played an im-

portant political rôle in Brazil's anti-Axis alignment against Nazi racism and fascism.

Instead of heightened partisanship over our differences of race codes and practises, it is quite within the range of possibility that, looking at matters more broadly and objectively, we shall move forward in our democratic efforts with a sense of collaboration and a common ultimate objective. For the more democracy becomes actually realized, the closer must our several societies approach a common norm.

Slavery is one of the oldest human institutions, nearly as old as man and nearly as universal. But the longest, the most extensive and the most cruel chapter in the history of human slavery is that dark African chapter of the trans-Atlantic slave trade precipitated by the colonial settlement of the Americas. We must never forget how substantially it helped to make the colonial conquest of the New World possible, thus laying the foundation of that American civilization which we all enjoy today. The slave trade involved the Three Americas. It has affected permanently both the population and the culture of the Americas; especially Mid-America. It has influenced the life of the Americas both for good and evil, and almost everywhere in America, to one degree or another, the shadow of slavery's yet incomplete undoing still clouds the possibilities of a fully democratic American society. Not only for the sake of the Negro, but for the sake of that democracy, these consequences must be overcome. It is fitting and necessary that the inequities and human disabilities which came into our Western world by way of the exigencies of its coloni-

al settlement should be liquidated through our collaborative efforts today to count as a representative American contribution to human freedom and democracy. That the Negro's situation in this hemisphere has this constructive contribution to make to the enlargement of the practise of democracy has been the main conviction and contention of these discussions. All segments of the Negro experience, that of the Latin as well as that of Anglo-Saxon society, must be focussed clearly and convincingly if America is to learn effectively the lessons which the Negro's history, achievements and social experience have it in their power to teach. And if the two wings of that experience teach that the open career for talent and the responsibility of the *élite* for the masses are both necessary for the full solution of the aftermaths of slavery, then the wisdom and uplifting force of both these principles must be effectively joined to enable democracy to rise and soar.

Only so can our whole American society, completely unshackled, fulfill our American institutions of freedom and equality. This, as I see it, is the constructive significance of the Negro to present-day America.

Again I thank all those who have so aided and added to the success of this series of lectures, but especially I thank those of you whose collaboration as a patient and responsive audience has given me such needed and welcome help and inspiration. It has been a great pleasure to have been among you and a great privilege to have been able to bring this message. All happiness, progress and prosperity to Haiti. Au revoir!