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The Negro in the USA: The Latest Phase

Charles H. Wesley
from Venezuela, silver from Mexico, coffee from Colombia, etc.

We will recall the territorial extension of South America and its population compared with that of the United States and India:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Territory</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South America</td>
<td>6,800,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North America</td>
<td>8,272,995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>1,805,332</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This clearly shows the importance of this new market for us.

India as well as South America are developing intensively now and rapidly progressing. This is but one of the many analogies. An interchange between these two great centres of culture and business appears like a necessity and will be of mutual benefit, both politically and economically.

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THE NEGRO IN U. S. A.—THE LATEST PHASE

BY CHARLES H. WESLEY, Ph. D.,
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During the year 1932-1933 there were several outstanding cases affecting the status of the Negro. Few periods since Reconstruction have witnessed such public interest and such importance attached to cases involving the Negro as this one. In three of these cases, the Negroes in Texas questioned the Constitutionality of a statute which gave political parties the right to prescribe the qualifications for participation in party primaries. The leading case of the three was Nixon v. Condon (286 U. S. 73) decided by the U. S. Supreme Court, May 2, 1932. The facts were that L. A. Nixon, A. Negro, attempted to vote in the Democratic primary in 1928. The judges of election declined to furnish the ballot or accept the vote. Nixon sued for damages. The District Court refused his claim and the Circuit Court of the United States affirmed this decision. Nixon then appealed to the Supreme Court and by a vote of five to four the former decision was reversed. Justice Cardoza delivered the opinion which held that the State had violated the Fourteenth amendment to the United States Constitution by denying the right of franchise in primary elections on account of race. Four justices maintained that the committee was not an agency of the State but that the State only recognized its existence. This decision may seem to be a victory for the Negro voters but the fact is that it did not affect the voting situation in any large way. The decision itself carried a sentence which showed the possibility of enforcing the desires of the white majority.

Moreover press reports indicated during this period that party leaders were determined to prevent the participation of the Negro in party politics. Such an opinion from Dallas, Texas was advanced in the New York Times, when it was asserted, “There are several ways and one will certainly be found, to keep the party, a white man’s party.” The Democratic convention meeting later in Austin passed a resolution stating that “all white citizens of the State who are qualified to vote under the constitution and laws of Texas shall be eligible for membership in the party and as such eligible for participation in the primaries.” The State Executive Committee ratified this action. Two other cases fol-
lowed in lower courts growing out of the continued effort of Negroes to vote. These were County Democratic Executive Committee v. Booker and White v. County Democratic Executive Committee. Decisions in both cases did not settle the question whether a political party can disbar Negroes from the Party primaries. It is said Negroes are now preparing to take one of these cases to the United States Supreme Court.

The Scottsboro Case (287 U. S. 45) has aroused considerable racial animosity in local areas of the South. In 1931, nine Negroes were indicated for rape, which is a capital offence under Alabama laws. This action was taken six days after the acts were said to have been committed. On November 7, 1932, the Supreme Court by a seven to two decision ordered new trials for seven Negroes who were condemned to death by the Alabama courts on the ground that the procedure of the lower court was a violation of the due process of law clause in the Fourteenth Amendment. Felix Frankfurter of the Harvard Law School said that “the Supreme Court last Monday, wrote a notable chapter in the history of liberty, emphasized perhaps in importance because it was conveyed through the sober language of a judicial opinion.”

The entrance of the International Labor Defence, a communist organization, which undertook the defence of the Negroes created racial feeling. Press comments seem to show that the position of the accused Negroes was prejudiced by the participation of the communists who undertook both a national and an international campaign in the interest of the defendants. The general opinion was that the I. L. D. was using the case to further the cause of communism. The employment of “Outside” attorneys and particularly the Jewish attorneys, Leibowitz and Brodsky, was an affront to local opinion. It was not strange that Circuit Solicitor Wright should exclaim to the jury: “Show them that Jew money from New York can’t buy Alabama justice.” A third racial antagonism was thus aroused.

The animosities created by this case were most unusual. Without a doubt race relations were stirred by the issue as never before. Throughout the winter and spring of 1932—1933 the discussion continued. The Executive Committee of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America issued a statement through Dr. Albert W. Beaven, its President, on May 29, 1933. This statement declared that the issues in the case were “neither local nor sectional” but that “the treatment of Negro citizens almost everywhere in America brings all of us to shame.” Many observers were of the opinion of John L. Spivak that it was not the Scottsboro Negroes who were on trial in this case but “the whole South’s operation of the legal machinery in so far as Negroes are concerned.” As the year 1933 has passed public interest in the case has waned but it has served as few cases and incidents have served to draw attention to Negro life in the South the administration of law in this section of the United States as it relates to the Negro population.

Another case of momentous consequences for race relations was the case of Hocutt v. the University of North Carolina. Thomas Hocutt, a Negro graduate of the North Carolina College for Negroes, applied for admission to the School of Pharmacy of the University of North Carolina. The custom and tradition in the South has been to admit no Negroes to the state universities. This application by Hocutt was a challenge of this custom. The suit was later discontinued on the ground that the phraseology of Hocutt’s bill was irregular. The Negroes of North Carolina propose to renew this suit and in the meantime a bill has been introduced to pay the tuition and the expenses of Negroe students in professional schools where “they may be lawfully admitted.” This is the first challenge in recent years to the
policy of the state universities of the South. Such a challenge bids fair to disturb the present racial lines in State education.

The hearings in the Lee v. Maryland case have brought to the view of the public the policy of excluding Negroes from jury service. For years no Negroes had been drawn for such service. The court of appeals reversed the conviction of Lee on the ground that the accused was entitled to a jury from which his race was not excluded on account of color or race although he was not entitled to a jury composed in part or in whole of the members of the Negro race. This was held to be a violation of the Fourteenth Amendment, a new trial was then held, in which two Negroes were called for grand jury service. Later, almost as a result of this case, eighty of the forty-eight jurors called for the April term 1933 of the Circuit Courts in Anne Arundel County, Maryland, were Negroes. For the first time in sixty years a Negro was a member of a jury in Chattanooga, Hamilton County, Tennessee in 1933.

The Crawford case in Boston, Massachusetts, which grew out of an extradition process in January, 1933 by the state of Virginia brought up the same question again. It was alleged that Crawford, accused of murder in Virginia, would not receive a fair trial there because Negroes were excluded from the jury in the State. Judge James Lowell of the United States District Court in Massachusetts declined to grant the extradition papers and ordered Crawford released because colored persons were barred from service on the grand jury which returned the indictment against him. Virginia whites gave violent answers to this decision in the public press and in Congress. The question of the neglect to call and select Negroes for service on grand juries raises a new issue in law procedure. The lawyers for Crawford assert that this discrimination is customary in the state of Virginia so that it has become a matter of common "knowledge" and "is admitted by the officers of that state." One of the indirect results of this case was the appointment of a Negro to a jury in Alexandria, Virginia for the first time in years. Other local challenges to jury service for white persons only have continued throughout the year. Race relations have been disturbed momentarily but Negroes have been called to service on juries where they had not been called for decades. No racial disturbances have occurred in those places where Negro jurors have served, contrary to some expectations.

The Leadership of Negroes.

A third significant trend is the emphasis upon Negro leadership for Negroes. In two cases of the appointment of men to outstanding places of public service, Negroes have been insistent in 1933 upon the appointment of members of their race to these places. When a vacancy occurred in the representation of the United States government in Liberia, protest was voiced by Negro organizations when a white man, Ceney Werlich, was appointed by President Roosevelt. A committee representing several of these organizations called upon Under Secretary Phillips of the Department of State and urged the recognition of Liberia, the appointment of a Negro minister and the reduction of the Firestone influence in the political affairs of the African Republic. A similar protest went up when Clark Foreman, also a white man, was appointed in August, 1933 as adviser on Negro affairs in the Department of Interior under Secretary Ickes. The protest asserted that the period of paternalism was passed in Negro life and that in present circumstances a Negro was the best informed individual on the condition of
color of the worker and not upon efficiency, type of work or productivity. The United States Government now tells the South to put a stop to race discrimination as it relates to wages for the same work. This is a significant step for Negro labor in 1933 and will be still more significant if it succeeds. The administration of relief has been regarded as fair but instances of discrimination and neglect are not unusual.

In spite of the darker aspects of the picture, in race relations' organizations, in the courts of law, in Negro leadership, Negro Education and in the current depression, the relations of the races continue to improve. Understandings have increased and friendly contacts between schools and groups have developed. The future, with safe leadership in both racial populations, should increase the opportunities for the co-operation and the adjustment of the races to one other, in spite of the separate spheres in which each may be compelled to live.

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THE MACEDONIAN MELTING POT

BY ASIT MUKERJI

Macedonia, lying between the modern Balkan States of Greece, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Albania, is the most debatable region in Europe. It had been contested in the Middle Ages by the Greek, the Bulgar and the Serb. As the liberated Christian states of the Balkans, in the last century, found their feet and began to look round them and anticipate the dissolution of the Ottoman empire, the age-old racial conflict revived. Each of the races interested was substantially represented in the motley population. The Greeks have never been ousted from the central region and the bulk of the inland population, though containing large Albanian, Vlach and gypsy elements, has always been predominantly Slav. But the nature of this Slav race is the subject of the bitterest controversy. The Bulgars are bound to the South Slavonic race by ties of religion and language. But they possess a considerable admixture of Finno-Ugrian blood and the events of the past fifty years have emphasised their differences with, rather than their solidarity with, the rest of the Yugoslavs.

Never is an unfortunate land better fitted to become the theatre of propaganda; and in the Protean forms of religion, education, arson, violation and murder, propaganda has increasingly raged. It has been truly said that Macedonia has been conquered and re-conquered, ravaged and raped back and forth, nationalized and de-nationalized so often that even the Last Judgment will find difficult to settle once for all the question of its racial identity.

By the Treaty which concluded the Second Balkan War, Serbia and Greece divided most of Macedonia between them, leaving to Bulgaria the wild regions and a coastline on the Aegean Sea. Macedonia had, it is true, come out of Turkish rule; but in the settlement there was no question of self-determination for the Macedonians nor of the rights of nationalities, and the Bulgars of Macedonia were left under the Serbian yoke. The peculiarity of Balkan warfare is that it has no beginning and no end. Treaties do not bring peace to the Balkans—they hand over tracts of country from one Power to another, as though the human beings who inhabit them were no better and no wiser than the goats and wildfowl of their mountains and lakes. War means the burning of villages, and suf-