

NORTH CARING FOR NEGROES OF GREAT MIGRATION

Gradually, as Experience Grows, Colored Labor is Given Responsible Work

(By Llewellyn Smith)

According to Phil H. Brown, Commissioner of Conciliation, United States Department of Labor, 478,700, or nearly half a million, Negro migrants forsook their abodes and occupations and drifted to the teeming industrial centres of the North during the period beginning September 1, 1922 and ending August 31, 1923.

In an analysis of the 478,700 total, Commissioner Brown, who is one of the few colored government officials at Washington, is careful to point out that of Negro migrants for the period noted, Alabama yielded 90,000; Arkansas, 5,000; Florida, 90,000; Georgia, 120,600; Kentucky, 2,500; Louisiana, 15,000; Mississippi, 82,600; North Carolina, 25,000; Oklahoma, 1,000; S. Carolina, 25,000; Tennessee, 10,000; Texas, 2,000; and Virginia, 100,000.

It will be remembered that during the period of the war the eodus of Negro migratory labor approximated 400,000. While some of the men, with the coming of the winter season, drifted back South, the bulk of them remained. A glance at the mushroom growth of the "black belts" of Chicago, New York, Pittsburg, Hartford, Detroit, Cleveland, is conclusive proof of this. In spite of the South's "shameless wooing of the departing Abyssinians."

"Not since the Children of Israel crassed the Red Sea," said Commissioner Brown, "has the world seen such a cataclysmic sweep of human folk from one part of the country to the other."

Without endeavouring to get at the basic causes of the migration, which are multitudinous, it is reasonably certain that by coming North the Negro did not leave his problem behind him, but brought, literally brought a stranger, fiercer, more complex one, the solution of which lies in the hands of forward-thinking leaders of both the white and the Negro races.

Housing a Grave Problem

Innumerable problems, such as that of housing, of finding a job, of adjusting himself to his new environment, must be reckoned with. Agricultural workers for the most part, one can readily conceive from a purely industrial standpoint, of the problems that must of necessity arise out of a situation where skill and experience and a modicum of technical knowledge of industry and the life that is synonymous with it are enthroned.

In an interview with the writer, an official at Washington remarked, "It is all very well to help the Negro to come North, but you must not forget that you cannot convert a cotton picker into a steel worker overnight."

Besides the problem of industrial adjustment, there is the larger, more vital one, of the relations between the races. Your Second Avenue radicals are continuously harping on the solidarity of black and white workmen. It is said that the Socialists have gone so far as to subsidize a Negro magazine in New York which

is doing its utmost to bring white and black workingmen together. Fortunately, or unfortunately, the magazine in question, from its lofty messianic pedestal, is not, and cannot possibly be read by the Negro working class. It is too glamorously intellectual, too obviously and characteristically a rehash, without regard to the Negro's condition or particular needs, of the Marxian theories of the scarlet journals.

In other words, while it is conceivable for a Negro poet or scholar, out of the moaning void, to rise up, and sound a discordant note in defense of the spiritual liberties of the black man, the bulk of the Negro people, for a long time to come, must resign themselves to the soil, to the accumulation of wealth and property and the development of a living standard approximating that of the white man. This is an elemental fact that most Negro leaders are not willing to face.

With the oncoming of the blacks to the cities of the North, the need for work of this nature is becoming more and more acute. There is one organization, however, that is bravely blazing the trail along this line. That organization is the National Urban League for Social Service among Negroes.

The Urban League was founded twelve years ago by Mrs. William H. Baldwin, a white woman. Its aim was to help adjust the Negro migrant from the South to the conditions confronting him in the North. With a budget of \$2,500 to start out with, its first executive secretary was Mr. Eugene Kinckle Jones, a colored graduate of Virginia Union University, and a former teacher in the high schools of New York City.

At first the Urban League concerned itself chiefly with finding the new migrants jobs. It brought to the attention of Northern employers the vast reservoir of Negro labor that was then coming North. (Negro labor was migrating at the rate of 20,000 a year.) All it asked was "not alms, but opportunity." It opened hitherto closed doors to skilled and unskilled Negro labor. Gradually its scope widened. It discovered that after it had found the migrant a job it was expected to do something about finding him a suitable place live and to furnish advice and counsel with regard to such basic things as health, child welfare, thrift, recreation, racial co-operation, and so on.

(To be concluded)

SAY IT WITH MUSIC

(By The Associated Negro Press)

Kingston, N.C., Jan.—When the orchestra in a colored theatre here fell through the floor the audience refused to accept it as an excuse for dispensing with music. Piano, traps, other instruments and their players piled up in the basement. The piano fell right side up. The gallery howled for music with its movies. The piano player stepped into the breach. The basement was flooded with rain, but he donned boots, secured a chair, and "sailed in." His first tune was "Sailing, Sailing, Over the Bounding Main."

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