

THE NEGRO AND HIS HISTORY
by
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WITHIN RECENT YEARS the movement to acquaint the Negro with his past has grown to great proportions until today it represents a formidable movement enjoying unusual popularity among thinking Negroes. Those who are leading the movement argue, and rightly so, that if the Negro is ever to change his present sycophantic attitude toward his white brother, it is essential that he know something concerning his worthwhile contributions to American civilization (whatever that is) and particularly his contributions to the sum total of human civilization.

THE MOVEMENT HAD ITS BIRTH in the period of the world war. During those days the atmosphere was literally charged with the proclaimed idealism of Woodrow Wilson; the "New Freedom" was at hand. "Self-determination for all peoples", "the right of the governed to have a voice in government" caught the attention of every oppressed group and offered to them a basis for claiming rights which up to that time they had not enjoyed. Under such circumstances it was well-nigh impossible for the Negro not to be influenced by this rebirth of racial and national aspiration.

THERE IS NO DENYING THE FACT that the story of the Negro, in the Western world especially, has been written by prejudiced hands with prejudiced pens. The story which these "historians" have given to the world about the Negro is, to a large measure, responsible for much of the hostility the Negro today faces in America, and for the false conception white America has of him to say nothing about the Negro's own sense of inferiority as a result of such "padded" and "expurgated" history.

IT IS OF THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE that white America become acquainted with the fact that her Negro citizenry are not primarily "rapists", "chicken thieves", "water-melon eaters", "former slaves" and at present "peons", but that in proportion to the rest of the population the Negro is less of these than his Caucasian countrymen. When white and black children will be permitted to read in their history books, of Negro inventors, explorers, sculptors, poets, statesmen, soldiers, and scientists - even as today they read of white benefactors, undoubtedly a great step shall have been made toward the greatly desired goal of destroying the inferiority complex of the Negro and also elevating him in the estimation of his white brothers.

IT IS OF EVEN GREATER IMPORTANCE that those Negroes now engaged in the admirable task of resurrecting from the sepulcher of silence the creditable contributions of the Negro which race prejudice has buried therein, recognize the similarity of treatment historians accord the Negro and the working class of every race. Neither the history of nations nor the history of races adequately tell the story of the workers. In the past those who have written popular history either actually belonged to the ruling class, or were the recognized spokesmen of that class. History to those "historians" simply meant glorification of the status quo and deification of the master class.

IF ONE GOES THROUGH the pages of any popular history of any nation with a more or less keen eye, the similarity of both form and substance which characterize the work will be readily recognized. The rich are lionized; the soldier, the statesman, the king, the politician, form the center around which "history" is written and explained. Even now among Negro historians engaged in excavating the buried story of their race, this tendency is becoming increasingly marked.

NOT UNTIL OUR STANDARDS OF "value" and "success" change; not until the workingclasses succeed in establishing industrial democracy, and thus produce the free historian, will history take into account the invaluable contributions of those who serve society in mill and mine, in factory and on the farm, without regard to race, or creed, or color.

IN THE MEANTIME let the Negro know that he was not always a slave, but that he once ruled a mighty empire, Ethiopia, to which the great French historian and philosopher, Count Vollney, pays the following immortal tribute;

"THERE A PEOPLE, NOW FORGOTTEN, discovered, while others were yet barbarians, the elements of the arts and sciences. A race of men, now rejected from society for their sable skin and frizzled hair, founded on the study of the laws of nature, those civil and religious systems which still govern the universe."

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THINKS ANOTHER U. S. APOLOGY CALLED FOR

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti.--Commander George A. Duncan, U. S. Navy, and the American Minister, Mr. Dana Munro, have refused to recognize the appointments of President Stenio Vincent of Haiti of three Haitians to the Public Works Department.

"For having repeated a story concerning Premier Mussolini," the Haitian Patriotic Union points out, "U. S. General Smedley D. Butler was to have been court martialled. Haiti's President has been insulted by Commander Duncan and Mr. Munro. We await the outcome!"

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There are 90,000 Negro members of international unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor, according to the results of an investigation made by A. Philip Randolph, president of the Brotherhood of Pullman Porters.

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