

A SLEEPING RACE IN A SICK WORLD  
By Frank R. Crosswaith  
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"We live in a sick world" Norman Thomas, Socialist leader, told the twenty-second annual conference of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People at Pittsburgh, Pa. "In this sick world the Negro is peculiarly the victim." He is the marginal worker, most pathetic of all the victims of unemployment and landlordism. "It is too late in the day for the race to save itself by simply following the white race in developing its own bourgeoisie."

It is to be hoped that those who heard Mr. Thomas' speech and those who have read it, will give due consideration to the sound point of view he expressed.

Changes Must Come

No intelligent person today will deny the fact that the world is seething with unrest. On every hand there is unmistakable evidence of fundamental, far reaching changes impending. Our industrial order has obviously broken down, leaving the working masses buried beneath the debris, weighted down by poverty and misery in an age that brags of its magic process of machine production.

Due to mechanical inventions, scientific and medical researches, the average life span of modern man has increased fully a third in the past two generations. Space, which has heretofore separated nations, races and continents, has been shrunk through the use of machinery. More and more each day the essential economic and social unity of the world is becoming apparent to him who hath eyes to see and ears to hear.

At this turning point in human affairs, it is most disturbing to observe the utter disinterestedness of the Negro. He seems less concerned with what is taking place in his world than any other section of the American working class. This fact is little short of a tragedy, for in the possibility of social, economic, and political improvements the Negro has more to gain and less to lose than any other element of the world's disinherited.

No Hope Under Capitalism

This apathy of the Negro was made doubly manifest by comparing the speeches made in Negro colleges during the current commencement season with those made in white colleges. In the latter institutions, the speakers took note of the fact that the thought stream of the world is rapidly turning toward a consideration of things economic, and sought to impress its importance upon the consciousness of their hearers. In Negro institutions, the speeches with but little variation dealt with things ephemeral, abstruse, and largely religious.

In those few instances where this indictment does not hold true, Negro graduates were asked to believe that by accepting the present economic and social order they could rise to the heights of a

Negro ruling class. To believe this notion is to imitate the ostrich. As Norman Thomas said, the Negro has come too late upon the stage of economic action ever to hope to develop a ruling class through the tortuous route of capitalist competition. This dream is not only unrealizable for the Negro but for an overwhelming majority of white workers as well.

Produce for Use, Not Profit

With the irresistible march of the machine goes the concentration of wealth into fewer and fewer hands. More and more business today is measured in terms of billions of dollars and neither the Negro nor the white worker can look for salvation in this field. The much glorified middle class is being exterminated.

Even if it were possible for a few Negroes to enter the ruling class via the competitive route, that would help working masses of the race no more than a few white millionaires have improved the economic and social welfare of their race. Six million unemployed white workers is proof conclusive of this fact.

The hope of the Negro masses, like the hope of the white, is in a new social order where work and worth will go hand in hand, where the machine - the social heritage of man - will be collectively owned and democratically operated for the satisfaction of human needs and not for piling up profits for the few. It is to such a program that the Negro should give his support. The sooner the better.

UNEMPLOYED COUNCIL FORMED

BOSTON--A representative group of colored people met in the Community Center of St. Mark's Congregational Church, Roxbury, and organized themselves into a progressive body to be known as the Massachusetts Unemployed Council.

Arthur C. Parker, Associate Editor of Negro Labor News Service, worked arduously to bring the council into being and presided over the first meeting. He outlined the object and plan of the organization to be one which will fill a desired and neglected function in the Negro worker's endeavor to stabilize himself economically.

Frank R. Crosswaith, guest speaker, addressed the meeting on the dire need of cooperative action by the colored people. "All ministers, lodges, and civic leaders," he said, "should and must sublimate their differences to unite in work for economic security for the masses of colored people."

The Council will try to find, create, and secure opportunities of employment for worthy unemployed persons. It will appeal to proprietors of stores and other business institutions in locations predominantly colored, who employ one or more clerks or attendants, to keep regularly employed at least one Negro. When necessary, it will attempt to force disinterested, prejudiced, or obstinate proprietors to cooperate with the Council by picketing and critical publicity when necessary.

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