THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW NEGRO LEADERSHIP, 1912-1917

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PREFACE

The years from 1905 to 1920 witnessed the appearance of a new Negro leadership in the United States in opposition to the prevailing race philosophy. This paper is concerned with the attempts made by the new Negro leadership to associate its program with what it believed to be the idealistic nature of both the Woodrow Wilson administration and the World War. The period under consideration begins with the election of 1912 and ends with the military participation of the Negro race in the War late in 1917.

The program of the new leadership has been drawn largely from the editorial comment of a selective and what is hoped a representative number of Negro publications.

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INTRODUCTION

The freedmen, the vast majority of the Negroes in the post-Civil War United States (1865-1890), generally lacked the economic and educational basis to give their newly won political liberty independent direction. As a result, they passed from the paternalistic and usually exploitative carpetbag regimes to a similar situation under the Redeemer governments. But by being allied with the conservative controlling segment of the southern Democratic Party against the more anti-Negro lower economic and social element of the Party, the southern colored citizens, prior to 1890, experienced little widespread legislative segregation and, although for the most part under the direction and dominance of their "allies," remained politically alive.

Northern race leaders of the abolitionist tradition, such as Frederick Douglass, after 1877, continued to demand aggressive political activity by the colored citizenry. However, with the disappearing zeal of the North for the Negroes' plight and the decline of the Republican Party in the South, the Douglass appeal had little effect. Others, such as T. Thomas Fortune, a leading Negro journalist, during the 1880's advocated independent political action by the black race as a means of bargaining for increased economic and political opportunities. The hope of wielding the political balance of power in the South seemed to be within the grasp of the Negroes with the emergence of the Farmer's Alliance movement and the resulting split in the Democratic Party. The

insurgent Democrats, joined by many southern Republicans, appealed for the colored vote by denouncing lynchings and promising the Negroes full political rights. But out of this promising situation for the colored race developed a general movement in the South in the 1890's, sanctioned by court decisions, which by 1910 had almost completely disfranchised the black citizens and had introduced widespread "Jim Crowism."

The Negro in countering the new aggressive racist attacks had little chance of aid from the national Republican Party which as early as the 1880's had endorsed the white supremacy movement in the South. In addition the climate of the Spanish-American War provided added impetus to the idea of Caucausian supremacy. After 1900, race riots and anti-Negro literature furthered the racist thinking and increased the difficulties for the black race.

During the critical period from 1890 to 1910 Booker T. Washington, the principal national leader of the colored race, did not consciously encourage or sanction the innovations, but his program for the race generally proved to be compatible with the results if not the spirit behind the anti-Negro legislation. The Tuskegee President's basic goal was to win white support and philanthropy for Negro education. He relegated political activity to the future and accepted social separation. However, he continually fought for equality of "Jim Crow" accommodations and attended the various disfranchising conventions, where he endorsed the principle of limited suffrage but urged application of the limitations without regard to race.

The Tuskegee philosophy, reacting against the disappointments of political activities during Reconstruction and based on a realistic appraisal of the Negroes' economic needs, rested on the belief

that self-improvement, primarily through economic progress and a conciliatory attitude, would bring inevitable progress in the political and social spheres. This was pragmatic and realistic, but it required at least the good will if not the cooperation of the whites. It was more compatible with the old southern paternalistic attitude than the late nineteenth century aggressive expressions of racism.

Partly due to the belief that the Tuskegee method contributed to or was not adequate to cope with the new problems, and because of the general reform spirit of the time, Washington's ideas and leadership were increasingly challenged after 1902. The first significant Negro figure to offer resistance to, and the man that became the leading dissenter from the Washington school of thought was a Massachusetts-born Atlanta University professor of sociology, W.E.B. DuBois. In 1903, DuBois projected in his book, Souls of Black Folk, a belief that Washington's work, although necessary and valuable, was not sufficient, and the time had come for Negroes to demand full and equal rights of citizenship. The same year another important voice of dissent appeared in the person of William Monroe Trotter, a Harvard-educated lawyer who was founder and co-editor of the Boston Guardian, a Negro weekly. Trotter burst upon the national scene when he and his followers turned a Boston meeting which was being addressed by Washington, into a general riot. This action resulted in a thirty days jail sentence for Trotter and unanimous denunciation from the colored press for his unheard-of "irreverent" treatment of Washington.

In an attempt to unify the small group of "independents" or "radicals,"[1] DuBois issued a call for a secret convention of interested persons

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[1]The terms "radicals" and "independents" will be used to denote those

to meet near Niagara Falls in July, 1905. Out of this meeting of twenty-nine persons representing thirteen states, emerged the Niagara movement. They issued a manifesto that among other things demanded full suffrage for the Negroes, an end to "Jim Crowism," and the right of free association. However, the Niagara movement after reaching a high point of two hundred and thirty-six members in April, 1907, collapsed due to the lack of financial resources and to the active opposition of Washington. Also, the uncompromising character of both DuBois and Trotter caused internal dissension which resulted in the latter leaving the organization.

More dissatisfaction with the Tuskegee leadership appeared in 1906 as a result of major race riots in Atlanta and Brownsville. Alexander Walters, Bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and president of the Afro-American Council, broke with the Republican Party due to the handling of the Brownsville riot and organized the National Colored Democratic League. The Bishop in 1905 had unsuccessfully sought Washington's approval for his plan to convert the loosely organized and virtually inactive Council, the largest Negro organization in the United States, into a liberal weapon against the radicals. The Bishop's decision in 1907 to support the Democratic ticket placed him in opposition to Washington, who had established close relations with the national Republican Party prior to 1900.

The dissatisfaction with the Republican Party as a result of Roosevelt's handling of the Brownsville affair and the exclusion of

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Negroes who were opposed to Booker T. Washington's methods, especially his de-emphasis of political activity, and his accomodation attitude.

Negroes from the southern convention delegations, provided a rallying point for the radicals in 1908. Trotter, after his break with the Niagara organization, organized the National Equal Rights League in April, 1908. The main purpose of the League was to help prevent the nomination and election of William Howard Taft. DuBois by 1908 had developed his scheme of trying, though without success, to persuade the Democrats to repudiate the southern racial policies in return for the northern Negro vote, which he believed, if mobilized, could deliver New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Indiana and Illinois to the Democratic banner. During the campaign, he first advocated a boycott by the colored voters and then announced his support of William J. Bryan, although with little enthusiasm. The individualistic efforts of DuBois, Trotter and Walters on behalf of the Democrats had little success in attracting Negro support, due to the predominant Washingtonian influence, but it posed a potentially serious challenge to the traditional Republican Negro vote.

Late in 1908, as a result of a lynching in Springfield, Illinois, and the spreading racist actions outside the South, a group of northern reformers led by Oswald G. Villard, publisher of the Nation magazine and the New York Evening Post and the grandson of William Lloyd Garrison, launched a movement that in the following year culminated in the interracial National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

The Association was at first dominated by white citizens, including Jane Addams, John Dewey, William Dean Howells, Lincoln Steffens, Moorfield Storey, Mary White Ovington and Joel Spingarn. Only five Negroes attended the founding conference in February, 1909, and DuBois was the only Negro officer selected when the new movement was formally organized in May, 1910. He was named Director of Publications and was given complete editorial freedom in his supervision of the Crisis, the monthly organ of the N.A.A.C.P.

Alexander Walters, the Reverend J. Milton Waldron, the treasurer of the defunct Niagara association, and John B. Milholland, president of the Constitutional League, a national interracial lobbying organization for Negro rights, were the other significant colored charter members. Trotter declined to join because of his early conflicts with DuBois. Furthermore, he believed the tone of the movement was too conservative.

Thus in 1910, as the Negro disfranchisement and "Jim Crow" legislation was near completion in the South, the passive political and social philosophy of Washington was being challenged by a group of northern Negro and interracial organizations, supported by a segment of the northern independent white press and several Negro publications, including the Crisis, the Cleveland Gazette, the Baltimore Afro-American and the Boston Guardian, devoted to agitation, legal action and independent political pressure on behalf of immediate equal citizenship rights for the Negro.[2]

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[2]Additional introductory information can be found in the following. Basil Mathews, Booker T. Washington: Educator and Interracial Interpreter (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1948); Elliott M. Rudwick, "The Niagara Movement," Journal of Negro History (July, 1957), XLII, 177-200; C. Vann Woodward, Origins of the New South, 1877-1913 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1951), 75-107, 142-175, 321-396; Charles W. Puttkammer and Ruth Worthy, "William Monroe Trotter, 1872-1934," Journal of Negro History (October, 1958), VLIII, 298, 317; Emma Lou Thornbrough, "The Brownsville Episode and the Negro Vote," Mississippi Valley Historical Review (December, 1957), XLIV, 469-494.

CHAPTER I

THE RADICALS AND WILSON

The small group of Negro radicals and their white allies felt by 1912 that they had sufficient following and influence to extract concessions from one of the major parties. Having already rejected the Republicans, many of the radicals first chose the Progressive Party. However, the Progressive leadership refused to recognize the southern Negro convention delegations, and the platform committee rejected a civil rights plank drafted by DuBois and presented by Joel Spingarn.[1] As a result, the independent Negroes and their white supporters were obliged to obtain the best they could from Woodrow Wilson, despite their fears of the Democratic Party and the concern over Wilson's southern birth. Rumors that he had drawn the color line at Princeton and as Governor of New Jersey increased the anxiety of many of the leaders.[2]

Seeking some assurances, a committee from the Independent Equal Rights League headed by the Reverend Milton Waldron and William Monroe Trotter approached Wilson as early as July 16, 1912.[3] They apparently received only the vague response that if elected he would "seek to be President of the whole nation and would know no differences of race or

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[1]Francis L. Broderick, W.E.B. DuBois: Negro Leader in a Time of Crisis (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1959), 96.

[2]Arthur S. Link, Wilson: The Road to the White House (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1947), 501-502.

[3]Ibid., 502-504.

creed or section, but to act in good conscience and in a Christian spirit . . . ."[4]

However, Waldron made public alleged remarks by Wilson that he invited Negro support and would veto any anti-Negro legislation, passed by Congress. Upon learning of the action by Waldron, Wilson wrote to Oswald Villard denying that he had promised to veto any legislation or had said he was in need of Negro votes. In an attempt to clarify his views and to satisfy the demands upon him, Wilson urged Villard to prepare a statement that he could issue as his official position on the Negro question. But when Villard presented him with a draft prepared by DuBois it was rejected. Wilson was not willing to endorse the position that the Democratic Party sought or welcomed Negro support or that he personally was opposed to racial disfranchisement.[5] Throughout the remaining summer months of 1912, Villard and others continued to seek some statement on the Negro problem that would include definite proposals, but failed to receive a satisfactory response.

In October, Bishop Alexander Walters invited Wilson to address a mass meeting in New York City of the National Colored Democratic League. Walters had supported the Democratic Ticket since 1907 and was almost a party regular in comparison to the more independently oriented N.A.A.C.P., DuBois, and Trotter. Wilson declined the invitation but on October 16 sent a letter to the Bishop for public release.

> I hope that it seems superfluous to those who know me, but to those who do not know me perhaps it is not unnecessary for me to assure my coloured fellow citizens of my earnest

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[4]Ray Stannard Baker, Woodrow Wilson: Life and Letters (8 vols., New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company, 1927-1938), III, 387.

[5]Link, Road to the White House, 504.

> wish to see justice done them in every matter, and not mere grudging justice, but justice executed with liberality and cordial good feeling. Every guarantee of our law, every principle of our Constitution commands this and our sympathies should also make it easy . . . . My sympathy for them is of long standing, and I want to assure them through you that should I become President of the United States they may count upon me for absolute fair dealing and for everything by which I could assist in advancing the interests of their race in the United States.[6]

This became Wilson's official stand on the Negro question.

Despite the lack of specifies in these statements, Trotter and Walters and their respective organizations, the National Colored Democratic League and the National Independent Political League, gave Wilson their enthusiastic support. With less enthusiasm and more misgivings, DuBois and the leaders of the N.A.A.C.P. endorsed the Democratic candidate late in the campaign.[7] It is extremely unlikely that the efforts of the radicals on behalf of Wilson had any effect on the outcome of the election. Nevertheless, they confidently welcomed the inauguration and were sure that their efforts had not been in vain.

Any hopes held by the radicals of a "second emancipation" under Wilson were quickly dispelled as reports from the capital in the late spring of 1913 indicated that widespread segregation was being instigated in the Post Office and Treasury Departments. The administration's decision to introduce segregation was made as early as April 11, 1913. At that time during a cabinet meeting Postmaster General Burleson complained of friction between white and Negro railway mail clerks and suggested separation as the remedy, not just for his department but for all departments. He claimed to have discussed the matter with Bishop

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[6]Baker, Life and Letters, III, 387-388.

[7]Broderick, DuBois, 96.

Walters and other colored citizens and to have received the approval of most of them. The President gave his consent to the prepared changes and stated that he had ". . . made no promises in particulars to the Negroes, except to do them justice . . . ."[8]

When the segregation adjustments became apparent, the N.A.A.C.P. and Villard forwarded protests and inquiries to Wilson demanding some explanation. On July 23, in a letter to Villard, Wilson explained that it was

> . . . true that the segregation of the colored employees in the several departments was begun upon the initiative and at the suggestion of several of the heads of departments, but as much in the interest of the Negroes as for any other reason, with the approval of some of the most influential Negroes . . ., and with the idea that the friction or rather the discontent and uneasiness, which had prevailed in many of the departments would thereby be removed.

The President then justified the action as being in the best interest of the race.

> It is as far as possible from being a movement against the Negroes. I sincerely believe it to be in their interest.
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> . . . . .
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> I am sorry that those who interest themselves most in the welfare of the Negroes should misjudge this action on the part of the departments . . . . My own feeling is, by putting certain bureaus and sections in the charge of Negroes we are rendering them more safe in their possession of office and less likely to be discriminated against.[9]

As protests from the northern press and Church organizations were added to those of the Negroes, Wilson on September 8, in a letter to H.A. Bridgman, editor of the Congregationalist and Christian World, made his views on the segregation policies public.

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[8]Arthur S. Link, Wilson: The New Freedom (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1956), 246-247.

[9]Baker, Life and Letters, IV, 221.

> . . . I do not approve of the segregation that is being attempted in several of the departments.
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> . . . .
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> . . . . but I think if you were here on the ground you would see, as I seem to see, that it is distinctly to the advantage of the colored people themselves that they should be organized, so far as possible and convenient, in distinct bureaux where they will center their work. Some of the most thoughtful colored men I have conversed with have. . .approved of this policy. I certainly would not myself have approved of it if I had not thought it to be their advantage and likely to remove many of the difficulties which have surrounded the appointment and advancement of colored men and women.[10]

Later in September, in a letter to Villard, Wilson offered a more apologetic explanation.

> What I would do if I could act alone you already know, but what I am trying to do must be done, if done at all, through the cooperation of those with whom I am associated with in the Government.
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> . . . .
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> . . . . I believe that by the slow pressure of argument and persuasion the situation may be changed . . . . But it cannot be done . . . if a bitter agitation is inaugurated . . . .[11]

Amidst the conflicting reports and rumors, the N.A.A.C.P. had conducted an investigation of conditions in the federal departments, as part of their nation-wide protest campaign. On November 17, the Association released its findings to the news services, five hundred newspapers, fifty religious publications and many magazine editors. Also the report was circulated to the members of Congress. It declared that segregation had been carried out in the Miscellaneous and Examining Division of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, the Dead Letter Office of the Post Office Department, and the auditor's office of the Post Office. In addition, the release claimed that plans were under way

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[10] Ibid., 223.

[11] Ibid.

to place the two hundred and seventy colored employees in the Treasury building into an all-Negro Registry Division.[12] The proposed all Negro Registry Division was originated by Secretary of the Treasury McAdoo. He justified it on the grounds that such a move would allow the Negroes to prove their independent merit.[13]

The nation-wide protests possibly had some effect on preventing any further extension of segregation after December of 1913. However, by that time most of the colored employees had been separated, and the abandonment of plans for the Registry was in part due to the failure to gain Senate confirmation of a Negro Register.

An anti-climax to the segregation controversy took place late in 1914. William M. Trotter, at the lead of a delegation of the National Independent Equal Rights League, met with Wilson on November 12, 1914. A Trotter committee once before, on January 6, 1914, had presented the President with an anti-segregation petition with 20,000 signatures.[14] The November interview scheduled for fifteen minutes lasted almost an hour as Trotter and Wilson became engaged in heated discussion that resulted in the President rebuking Trotter for his aggressive attitude and dismissing the delegation. Wilson declared any further discussions between himself and the Negro race would have to be with a different leader. During the interview the President stated that the segregation affair was a human and not a political question. He labeled Trotter's

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[12]Crisis, (December, 1913), VII, 88.

[13]McAdoo to Villard (October 27, 1913), Kathleen Long Wolgemuth, "Woodrow Wilson's Appointment Policy and the Negro," Journal of Southern History, (November, 1958), XXIV, 463.

[14]Crisis, (February, 1914), VII, 17; (January, 1915), IX, 119.

threat, that he would lose the Negro votes, blackmail and a matter of indifference to him. Wilson informed the delegation that the cabinet members had investigated the situation and had reported that,

> . . . the segregation was caused by friction between colored and white clerks and not done to injure or humiliate the colored clerks, but to avoid friction . . . . /They/ had assured him that the colored clerks would have comfortable conditions, though segregated. He had taken their view that the segregation was the best way to meet this situation . . . .

The President then elaborated on the Negro problem in general.

> It will take one hundred years to eradicate this prejudice, and we must deal with it as practical men. Segregation is not humiliating but a benefit, and ought to be so regarded by you gentlemen. If your organization goes out and tells the colored people of the country that it is a humiliation, they will so regard it, but if you do not tell them so, and regard it rather as a benefit, they will regard it the same. The only harm that will come will be if you cause them to think it is a humiliation.

Trotter countered with the claim that for fifty years white and colored have worked together in peace and harmony and accused Wilson of violating his 1912 pledges that had given many Negroes the belief that he would be "a second Lincoln."[15]

In an attempt to rally support and keep the controversy alive, Trotter conducted a lecture tour in the East and Middle West, but with little success.[16] He was condemned for his lack of tact and diplomacy by several of the colored newspapers.[17] The affair did serve further to confirm Wilson's position and alienate Trotter and other Negroes who had supported him in 1912. An example was the Baltimore Afro-American,

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[15]Crisis, (January, 1915), IX, 119-120; New York Times, November 13, 1914, 5.

[16]Crisis, (February, 1915), IX, 166.

[17]Crisis, (January, 1915), IX, 122.

which had been placing all of the blame for the segregation policies on the southern influence, especially on Senator James K. Vardaman of Mississippi.[18] But after the Trotter interview the Afro-American finally gave up all hope. "Mr. Wilson has proved himself to be a traitor, to be a receiver of goods under false pretense. . . ."[19]

Concurrent to the segregation dispute and serving as added evidence to the radicals that they had misplaced their support in the 1912 election,were the President's patronage policies in regard to the Negro. When Wilson took office in 1913, Negroes held over fifty federal appointive positions. Of these, thirty-one were positions of authority and objects of race pride. The most significant were the traditional Negro posts of minister to Haiti, register of the Treasury, and recorder of deeds for the District of Columbia. Others of importance were the Consul at Cognac, France; a municipal judgeship in the District; an assistant attorney-general; minister to Liberia and auditor for the Navy. The remaining positions included four postmasterships, six collectors of internal revenue and customs, three assistant district attorneys and five consulships.[20]

Wilson apparently decided to maintain the status quo in Negro office holders, as evidenced by remarks during a cabinet meeting,[21] statements to Senator James Kimble Vardaman of Mississippi,[22] and the fact that Trotter and Walters prepared a list of prospective appointees but suggested no new posts. After the inauguration, Trotter and Walters became uneasy as the

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[18]Baltimore, Afro-American, December 27, 1913, January 3, 24, 1914; February 14, 1914; editorials.

[19]Ibid., November 14, 1914, editorial.

[20]Wolgemuth, "Wilson's Appointment Policy and the Negro," 458-467.

[21]Link, New Freedom, 247.

[22]A.S. Coody, Biographical Sketches of James Kimble Vardaman (Jackson, Mississippi: A.S. Coody, publisher, 1922), 57-59.

President delayed acting on their recommendations, and the uneasiness increased when he dismissed the auditor of the Navy and the assistant attorney general and replaced them with whites.[23]

After James C. Napier resigned as register of the Treasury in protest against the segregation policies, Wilson appointed as his successor A. E. Patterson, a Negro lawyer from Oklahoma who had been an active supporter of Wilson in 1912. However, Patterson withdrew in the face of Senatorial protest led by Vardaman of Mississippi, who had declared his opposition to all Negro patronage except for the post of minister to Liberia.[24] The fact that Napier's eventual replacement was an Indian seemed added insult to the colored race. But it was Patterson, not Wilson, who received the wrath of the Negro press.[25]

The first major protest came in August, 1913, when Wilson broke precedent and ignored the wishes of the Haitians by appointing a white minister to Haiti to replace H.W. Furness, an Indiana Negro, who had served under Roosevelt and Taft.[26] The following year the new minister resigned but was succeeded by another white man.[27]

Those who thought southern opposition motivated the President's seemingly anti-Negro patronage actions had temporarily to reappraise the chief executive in February of 1914, when he renominated Robert B. Terrell as a District of Columbia Municipal Judge. Despite heated Southern opposition led by Senators Vardaman and John Sharp Williams of Mississippi, Wilson and John W. Kern of Indiana, the administration's

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[23]George C. Osborn, "Woodrow Wilson appoints a Negro Judge," Journal Southern History, (November, 1958), XXII, 484.

[24]Wolgemuth, "Wilson's Appointment Policy and the Negro," 461.

[25]New York Times, August 14, 1913, 8.

[26]Wolgemuth, "Wilson's Appointment Policy and the Negro," 464.

[27]Crisis, (July, 1914), VIII, 115.

floor leader, firmly pushed for Senate confirmation.[28] In a letter to John Sharp Williams, the President sought to placate the opposition to Terrell's appointment. He praised the nominee's qualifications, cited his own campaign promises and stated in view of the circumstances his action was regrettable but unavoidable. Wilson informed Williams he felt obligated to maintain the status quo in Negro-held positions in the District.[29]

Although his action was praised by the colored press, apparently Wilson's experiences with the Terrell affair convinced him that any further Negro appointments would be unwise. It is also possible that he pushed for the Terrell confirmation only because of an intensive pressure campaign on behalf of the judge. The President and Attorney-General James C. McReynolds were subjected to a letter and petition barrage in Terrell's behalf several months before the judge's term expired.[30] In any event, Wilson explained to Bishop Walters in 1916 that he would not appoint a Negro as recorder of deeds for fear of precipitating a racist debate in the Senate which, according to Wilson, would be harmful to the Negro.[31]

During Wilson's first administration the Negroes lost all but eight of the fifty plus federal appointive positions that they had held under Taft. Of these, seven were foreign. They retained the consulships of St. Thomas, St. Etienne, Madagascar, Sierra Leone, and Cap Haitien. However, George H. Jackson, a Taft appointee as consul at Cognac, was

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[28]Baltimore Afro-American, February 28, 1914, 1; May 2, 1914, 1.

[29]Baker, Life and Letters, IV, 228.

[30]Osborn, "Woodrow Wilson Appoints a Negro Judge," 482-484.

[31]Crisis, (March, 1916), XI, 215.

replaced by a white in 1913. The Cognac position was regarded as the best ever held by a Negro in the consular service. Besides the five consulships the post of legation secretary in Liberia remained in the possession of Negroes. The only new position obtained under Wilson was a deputy corporation inspectorship at Boston.[32] This was one of the five Negro appointments made by Wilson. The other four were Patterson, Terrell and two ministers to Liberia.[33]

As a result of Wilson's segregation and patronage policies with regard to the colored race, the hopes possessed by the radicals in 1912 had been shattered completely by the end of 1915. The credit or blame for the President's racial policies probably belongs to the southern members of his party in Congress. Wilson as early as August, 1912, had shown his reluctance to oppose the southern legislators, when he refused to appoint, at the suggestion of Villard, a commission to study race relations.[34] To have opposed the southern democrats on the racial issue could possibly have endangered parts of his program Wilson considered more important.

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[32] Crisis, (February, 1914), VII, 170.

[33] Ibid., (November, 1913), VII, 326.

[34] Link, New Freedom, 244-245; Baker, Life and Letters, IV, 222.

CHAPTER II

THE RADICALS AND THE NEW SOUTH

Although the attention of the radicals from 1913 to 1916 was primarily devoted to President Wilson's policies, the most abusive attacks on the black Americans during those years originated on the floors of Congress. And as disillusionment with the President increased, the influence of the southern white supremacists in the legislative branch became, for the radicals, the obvious explanation for Wilson's attitude toward the Negro.[1]

With their party in control of Congress and the Presidency for the first since the new aggressively anti-Negro sentiment had become widespread, the southern extremists in 1913 began to intensify their efforts to bring about nationwide adoption of their state racial policies. On the day the Sixty-third Congress convened (April 7, 1913), Representative Frank Clark introduced two bills, one prohibiting racial intermarriage and the other requiring separate transportation accomodations for the races in the District of Columbia.[2] During the first session three more bills proposing segregation of the District transportation facilities were sponsored by House members William Schley Howard of Georgia, Joseph B. Thompson of Oklahoma and Byron P. Harrison of Mississippi and Thomas

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[1] Crisis, (February, 1914), VII, 188.

[2] Congressional Record (104 vols. to date, Washington, D.C.; Government Printing Office, 1873---), Sixty-third Congress, First Session, L, pt. 1, 86.

H. Hardwick of Georgia. The latter also was author of two joint resolutions proposing repeal of the fourteenth and fifteenth amendments. A similar joint resolution was introduced in the Senate by Ellison D. Smith of South Carolina.[3]

Furthermore, during the first session attempts were made to involve Congress in the segregation dispute between Wilson and the radicals. Several southern congressmen encouraged the National Democratic Fair Play Association, organized in Washington, D.C., to publicize alleged abuses in the federal civil service. On one occasion Schley Howard promised the Fair Play group he would work for the dismissal of all colored employees in the railway mail service.[4] Partly as a result of a fact-finding campaign by the Association, a resolution was sponsored by Senator William Stone of Missouri directing the Committee on Civil Service and Retrenchment to report on the number of Negroes in classified civil service and other governmental work along with their aggregate salaries. The resolution passed on May 1, 1913, the same day the Fair Play organization held its first mass meeting in Washington.[5]

One of the most active congressmen in the segregation controversy was James B. Aswell, Representative from Louisiana, who introduced a measure to require segregation of civil service employees.[6] Moreover, he defended the separation policy adopted in the executive departments when Oswald Villard attacked the administration during a protest meeting at a

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[3]Ibid., pt. 1, 57, 227-228; pt. 2, 2013; pt. 3, 2071, 2462; pt. 5, 5109.

[4]New York Times, May 4, 1913, 13.

[5]Congressional Record, pt. 1, 878.

[6]Ibid., pt. 2, 1985.

District of Columbia church on October 27, 1913. Declaring himself a true friend of the Negro, he classified Villard as an "uninformed enthusiast" who, if acquainted with the average Negro of the South, would realize that the "child race" should not be tolerated in government service. If, according to Aswell, the editor was properly informed, he would favor restricting Negroes to "the industrial fields of endeavor where the Almighty by the stamp of color decreed they should be."[7]

Congressional interest in racial separation of government employees continued in the second session (December 6, 1913 to September 8, 1914), as House member Charles G. Edwards of Georgia sponsored a bill to require segregation.[8] Before the second session adjourned two other measures bearing directly on the colored race were introduced by Representative Frank Park of Georgia. He proposed the exclusion of all Negroes as commissioned or non-commissioned officers in either the Army or Navy. The second bill would authorize the acquisition of territory in Mexico for Negro colonization purposes.[9] Throughout 1913 the radicals exhibited little concern over the racist activities in Congress since they were concentrating upon Wilson. Moreover, no action was taken on any of the bills that were introduced. The N.A.A.C.P. did maintain two agents in the capital to report any discriminatory legislation.

In January 1914, the radicals, especially the N.A.A.C.P., became directly involved in a legislative matter for the first time. This was due to the agricultural extension bill providing federal aid for experimental educational projects. The measure was taken under consideration

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[7] Ibid., pt. 7, 411.

[8] Ibid., pt. 4, 3814.

[9] Ibid., LI, pt. 5, 4845; pt. 11, 11278.

by the Senate early in 1914. On January 28, Hoke Smith of Georgia withdrew his pending measure in favor of the Lever bills which had already passed in the House. The following day Porter J. McCumber, North Dakota Republican, brought up the question of possible racial discrimination when he expressed doubt that the colored institutions would gain their fair share in the ten southern states possessing separate agricultural schools, if the state legislatures were permitted unbridled control of the federal appropriations. McCumber indirectly received the support of Albert B. Cummins of Iowa, who in answer to Smith's argument that the backwardness of the Negro justified the rural per capita method of distribution, stated that if the Senator from Georgia was correct then provisions should be made guaranteeing to the Negro institutions a fair share. This provided James K. Vardman the opportunity to inject his racist arguments. The Negro, being an "imitator and devoid of initiative," according to the Mississippi Senator had to be led by the whites, thus there was no need for any division of funds.[10]

While the debate was going on in the Senate, the chief legal advisor of the N.A.A.C.P. and Republican Senator Wesley Jones of Washington were preparing what they considered a corrective amendment.[11] Offered February 5, 1914, it required the state legislature, after dividing the funds, to gain approval of the allocations from the Secretary of Agriculture. Senator John Works of California endorsed the plan and expressed the opinion that it would enable the Negro to obtain the benefits without having to observe the demonstrations on white farms "though the fences." The amendment was rejected by a vote of thirty-two to twenty-three, primarily because those who sympathized with the purpose of the proposal considered a

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[10] Ibid., pt. 2, 1935, 1947; pt. 3, 2519-2520, 2649- 659.

[11] Crisis, (March, 1914), XII, 247-248.

plan by Colorado's John Shafroth more suitable.

Under the Colorado Senator's arrangement the Secretary of Agriculture and the state governor would exercise joint control of the appropriations. The Senate accepted the Shafroth amendment plus one by Democrat Hitchcock of Nebraska calling for distribution without regard to race. However, both amendments were removed in conference, and the Smith-Lever bill passed without any specific provision insuring the Negro an equitable division.[12] The radical press urged a presidential veto, unless such protection was provided, but without success.[13]

The greatest threats to the interest of the colored race came in the last session (December 7, 1914 to March 4, 1915) of the Sixty-third Congress. On January 11, 1915, the Clark bills on intermarriage and transportation were reported from committee. On the same day the first measure, declaring all racial intermarriages null and void with possible penalties for violation amounting to five thousand dollars and/or five years imprisonment, passed the House, two hundred and thirty-eight to sixty. Martin B. Madden, Illinois Republican who had pleaded for an end to anti-Negro bills in the previous session, voiced the only opposition. He felt the Clark bill was unnecessary and claimed the purpose was not the good of both races, as claimed by Clark, but only a further attempt to degrade the Negro. Upon reaching the Senate the measure died in committee.[14]

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[12]Congressional Record, LI, pt. 3, 2929; pt. 4, 3117, 3123-3125; pt. 8, 7645-7646.

[13]Crisis, (July, 1914), VIII, 124, Baltimore Afro-American, February 14, 1914.

[14]Congressional Record, LI, pt. 2, 1326-1368, 1382.

The second bill sponsored by Clark, requiring all transportation companies, firms and persons within the District to provide separate accomodations, after being reported from committee was referred to the House calendar, where it died.[15] According to the Chicago Defender, economic considerations by the street car company played a role in the bill's defeat.[16]

The congressional action during the first Wilson administration which commanded the attention of all Negro leadership was amendment number eighteen to the Smith-Burnett literacy test immigration act. Senator James A. Reed of Missouri had put forth a similar amendment on December 31, 1914, which proposed to exclude all aliens not of the Caucasian race. These he stated were incapable of amalgamation. With only scattered southern and far western support, the amendment was defeated by a vote of forty-seven to nine. Believing the defeat could be attributed to the argument by Senators Henry C. Lodge and Elihu Root that the term "Caucasian" was ambiguous, Reed rephrased his amendment to exclude "all members of the African or black race . . . ." Mississippi Senator Williams, speaking in support of the proposal, argued that Orientals, who were superior to the Negro, had already been excluded. With only one southern Democrat, Joseph Robinson of Arkansas, in opposition, and gathering six votes from Oregon, Idaho, California, Washington and Arizona, amendment number eighteen passed the Senate by a vote of twenty-nine to twenty-five. On January 2, 1915, the immigration bill was approved by the Senate and forwarded to the lower chamber.[17]

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[15]Ibid., pt. 3, 2827.

[16]Chicago Defender, March 13, 1915, editorial.

[17]Congressional Record, LII, pt. 1, 802-807, 868.

When the bill was taken up for debate in the House on January 7, 1915, the Reed amendment was given first consideration. Republican opposition quickly appeared under the leadership of James R. Mann of Illinois. Representatives from Iowa, Illinois, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York and Massachusetts cited the loyalty of Negroes in past wars, praised their part in the construction of the Panama Canal, warned of the repercussions on missionary work in Africa, and expressed fear that racial strife would result if the amendment was included. In addition, Madden interpreted the amendment to mean that Negro citizens who traveled abroad would be refused re-entry into the United States. He pleaded that the Negro had suffered enough indignities without this added stamp of inferiority and humiliation.

Joe H. Eagle of Texas countered with the warning that should the amendment fail the thirty thousand colored Panama Canal workers would follow their high wages to the United States. Rising to heights of which racists could be proud, Percy E. Quin of Mississippi, declared that the Negroes were the "worst leper spots, barnacles, sores and misfortunes that the United States had had fastened to its civilization." If the white people refused to meet the challenge, according to Quin, the Negro race, or as he preferred the "parasitic black death," would bring destruction to the nation. Representatives Small and Aswell, of North Carolina and Louisiana respectively, echoed the sentiments of Quin and Eagle.[18]

The eventual failure of the proposed amendment in the House was, in large measure, due to two Texas Democrats, James L. Slayden and Martin Dies. They, with support from Alabama's John R. Burnett, appealed to

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[18] Ibid., LII, pt. 2, 1128-1138, pt. 6, 87, 91.

southern members to save the bill by defeating the amendment. Their arguments proved successful, as one hundred and fifty-seven Democrats joined with ninety-five Republicans to defeat the amendment by a vote of two hundred and fifty-two to seventy-five.[19] Without the amendment the literacy test bill was passed, only to be vetoed by Wilson on January 28, 1915.

In the sixty-fourth Congress, Reed again proposed his Negro exclusion amendment to a new immigration bill. It failed to gain Senate approval and was rejected, thirty-seven to thirty-two.[20]

During the debates on the Reed amendments in Congress, the colored press kept close watch on all happenings and all of the race leaders, including Booker T. Washington, denounced the amendments.[21] The Chicago Defender, reflecting the growing tendency of the race to use the loyalty appeal, pointed up the paradox of Negro troops fighting on the southern border against Mexican raiders to protect a country that proposed excluding members of their race.[22]

The leading white supremacist in Congress during Wilson's first administration was James K. Vardaman, who had been elected to the Senate primarily on a program that had as its cardinal tenet repeal of the fifteenth amendment.[23] Although he injected the racist theme at every opportunity, his most abusive attacks came in March, 1914, during the

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[19] Ibid., LII, pt. 2, 1135-1138.

[20] Ibid., Sixty-fourth Congress, First Session, LIV, pt. 1, 207-209.

[21] Savannah Tribune, January 16, 1915; Baltimore Afro-American, January 9, 1915; December 16, 1916.

[22] Chicago Defender, January 9, 1915, editorial.

[23] George C. Osborn, John Sharp Williams: Planter-Statesman of the Deep South (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1943), 156-157.

debate on the woman's suffrage resolution. He denounced the Negro females as "drunken, insolent, vulgar, ignorant and the most lawless abandoned creatures on earth." Even more importantly to the Senator, he believed they were "not so easily controlled as the males." His solution was an amendment to the suffrage resolution that would give the states absolute control of voting requirements except for sex. He was willing to support a reduction of congressional representation for the South if all obstacles to racial disfranchisement could be removed.[24]

Senators Jacob Gallenger of New Hampshire, Charles Townsend of Michigan and Moses E. Clapp of Minnesota, made brief statements opposing the Vardaman amendment. Francis Newlands of Nevada favored the amendment but feared that it would cause the suffrage resolution to be defeated. Senator Borah expressed a willingness to support repeal of the fifteenth amendment in order to remove southern opposition to female suffrage. Receiving only one northern vote, the proposal by Vardaman was rejected, forty-four to twenty-one. A second amendment offered by John S. Williams sought to confine the extension of the suffrage to white females only, but was defeated.[25]

Most of the southerners in Congress who discussed the Negro's role in the recurrent question of female suffrage, used the opportunity to exhibit their hatred of the entire race. Only a few, such as Ladislas Lazaro of Louisiana and Thetus W. Sims of Tennessee, realized that the white supremacists need not shudder with horror if the resolution passed. They only objected to the burden that would be placed upon the South of

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[24]Congressional Record, LI, pt. 5, 4338-4339.

[25]Ibid., LI, pt. 5, 4213, 4960, 5094, 5100-5105.

devising legal means of preventing the extension of suffrage.[26]

Likewise, the radicals understood the situation. The best they could hope for was that if the women's suffrage constitutional amendment was adopted and the expected disfranchisement followed in the South, then the rest of the United States might possibly exert some pressure for the enforcement of the fifteenth amendment due to the added discrepancy of the white voter's power in the South as compared to the rest of the nation.[27]

Failing to enact racist legislation during the Sixty-third Congress, the southern extremists in the House introduced eleven new measures on December 6, 1915, the first day of the Sixty-fourth Congress. Four of the bills were directed toward preventing racial intermarriage in the District of Columbia, three proposed District "Jim-Crow" transportation facilities, three dealt with segregation in government service, and the remaining one was a joint resolution to repeal the fifteenth amendment. Authors of these proposals were familiar names from the anti-Negro campaign in the previous congress, including Clark of Florida, Harrison and Candler of Mississippi, Aswell of Louisiana, Edwards and Vinson, both of Georgia. These six men accounted for ten of the eleven measures.[28]

Before the first session was over, two more bills specifically directed at the Negro were introduced. Samuel J. Tribble of Georgia wanted a nation-wide law prohibiting racial intermarriage and Thomas Sission of Mississippi sponsored a resolution that would require the Attorney-General to submit to the Supreme Court all information bearing on the validity of the

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[26]Ibid., LII, pt. 2, 1445, 1497.

[27]Crisis, (August, 1914), VIII, 180.

[28]Congressional Record, LII, pt. 1, 14, 20-31, 295.

fourteenth and fifteenth amendments. In the Senate, Vardaman during the second session tried once more to gain support for a joint resolution to repeal the fifteenth amendment but failed.[29]

During the Sixty-fourth Congress, seventeen anti-Negro measures had been introduced, none of which passed. This brought the total during Wilson's first administration to thirty-one. But by the end of 1915, the racist activities in Congress began to decline or at least temporarily to subside. Possibly the reasons for the surface restraint, especially in 1916, included political considerations due to the presidential election, the Mexican skirmishes, and the increasing involvement of the United States in the European War.

The radicals, although keeping informed on the events in Congress and frequently denouncing the southern extremists, more for their suspected role in segregation than for their legislative actions, continued to concentrate their efforts on Wilson, in whom there seemed to be some hope. As disappointment with the President increased, the new appeal and emphasis for the radicals became the importance of the Negro race in the event of a national crisis such as war.

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[29] Ibid., LIII, pt. 1, 562; pt. 2, 1543; LIV, pt. 1, 152.

CHAPTER III

LOYALTY AND WAR

The Negro radicals, by 1915, were without influence in either of the major parties and were in the precarious position of being labeled traitors to their race. This resulted from their alliance with the Democrats in 1912, just at the time racist sentiment on the national level within the party was the strongest in thirty-five years. The results of their political activities seemed on the surface to provide added argument for the Washingtonian non-political orientation.

Nevertheless, the N.A.A.C.P. maintained a steady growth. From 1912 to 1916, the paying membership increased from three hundred and twenty-nine to eight thousand seven hundred and eighty-five.[1] And when Booker T. Washington advised, during the height of the segregation controversy, that the Negroes cease their useless protesting and reject the uncertainties of political pursuits in order to have more time for building an economic foundation for progress, he was bitterly denounced by several of the normally non-radical colored newspapers. The Columbian Herald labeled the advice a "doctrine that had . . . resulted in growing up a generation of moral cowards . . . ," and the Cleveland Gazette termed it a "doctrine of surrender." The Louisiana News branded Washington a "White-Man-Made-Leader."[2] While the Tuskegee president, as a result of the

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[1]Kathleen L. Wolgemuth, "Woodrow Wilson and Federal Segregation," Journal of Negro History, (April, 1959), XLIV, 172-173.

[2]Crisis, (November, 1914), IX, 17; (December, 1914), IX, 71.

radicals' experiences with the Demoractic administration, became even more convinced that the economic basis offered the only hope for the advancement of the Negro, DuBois took the position that the events under Wilson only proved that the Negro had left politics alone too long and as a result, possessed no effective voice in his government.[3]

Although placed in a defensive position, due to their connections with the Democratic administration, the radicals had attracted considerable support in the struggle against segregation of the federal departments. In addition, a vigorous campaign was organized in 1915 against the racist motion picture "Birth of a Nation." Trotter, who had lost his chance for national leadership when he failed to rally support after his interview with Wilson, again received widespread publicity when he aided in the organization of over five hundred Negroes and whites in a near riotous protest move against the movie at a Boston showing. He and five others were arrested for their part in the demonstration.[4]

A ray of hope for the radicals' political activities came in June, 1915, when the Supreme Court in an N.A.A.C.P. sponsored test case voided the "Grandfather clause" of the Oklahoma constitution. The radicals acclaimed the decision as the most important political advance for the Negroes since emancipation, but believed there would be little immediate significance.[5]

Thus despite their political disappointments the radicals by agitation publicized their program and created nationwide awareness and some sympathy for their cause. And with the increasing foreign involvements

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[3]Ibid., (November, 1913), VII, 338.

[4]New York Times, April 18, 1915, 15.

[5]Crisis, (August, 1915), X, 171; (September, 1915), X, 232.

of the United States, they discovered an important new source for agitation and a possible basis on which to unify the efforts of all black citizens.

When the European war began in 1914, the radicals were primarily occupied with domestic affairs. Although sympathizing with England and France, because of their better race politicies, the independents endorsed the policy of neutrality by the United States. They regarded the war as being a white man's war to decide who would rule the black and yellow races of Asia and Africa. The invasion of Belgium had little effect on the radicals. It was regarded as "strict justice" for her "atrocities in the Congo."[6]

Despite showing little concern with the war and professing support of neutrality, the opportunities that such a crisis as a war might provide were not overlooked by the radicals. The use of colored troops by the Allies seemed to offer hope for progress in race relations.[7]

The radical Republican colored press, as represented by the Chicago Defender and the Savannah Tribune, was more enthusiastic concerning the opportunities war might create for the advancement of the race. While supporting neutrality,[8] they very clearly in 1915 expressed an almost wishful attitude about the possibility of United States involvement.

> A change from discrimination must and will come, either through an enlightened American conscience or through some great national crisis such as war.[9]

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[6]Baltimore Afro-American, December 12, 1914; March 6, 1915; (editorials); Crisis, (November, 1914), IX, 28-29.

[7]Baltimore Afro-American, August 8, 1914; October 4, 1914; (editorials).

[8]Chicago Defender, January 9, 1915; May 22, 1915; June 5, 1915; (editorials).

[9]Ibid., January 16, 1915, editorial.

> Every forward movement in the History of humanity has . . . . been accompanied by war.
>
> If war will bring a change . . . . let us have war; we have nothing to fear.[10]

The radical Republican elements within the race that anticipated possible benefits from a war very early adopted a threatening and bigoted loyalty appeal. They warned of the significance of the Negroes' role in a predicted future clash between the colored races, under the leadership of Japan, and the whites.[11] And in order to give added emphasis to the importance of the black Americans, they denounced the European Americans as "hyphenated" citizens as compared to the "true Americanism" of the colored race.[12]

The Negro spokesmen eager to reap the anticipated rewards of patriotism for the black Americans were faced with the possibility of not having a military outlet for any expressions of loyalty. On the state level they pleaded for the opportunity to form companies in the militia or national guard.[13] But by June, 1916, only Maryland, Ohio, Illinois, the District of Columbia, New York, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Connecticut and Massachusetts possessed organized Negro military units.[14] On the national level the preparedness-minded Negroes agitated for admittance

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[10] Ibid., February 6, 1915, editorial.

[11] Ibid., December 25, 1915, editorial; Savannah Tribune, January 22, 1916, editorial.

[12] Chicago Defender, November 13, 1915; September 4, 1915; September 18, 1915; June 3, 1916; January 29, 1916; (editorials).

[13] Savannah Tribune, April 1, 1916; July 29, 1916; (editorials).

[14] New York Times, May 19, 1913, 8; Baltimore Afro-American, June 24, 1916, 1.

to federal military schools, especially in view of the acceptance of Orientals and the tax-supported nature of the institutions.[15]

Southern opposition to Negro participation in preparedness developed in Congress as four bills were introduced between July, 1914 and July, 1916. Two of the proposed laws would have prohibited any Negro from serving as an officer in the Army or Navy. The remaining measures sought to prevent the enlistment or reenlistment of any members of the black race.[16] The Negroes received the support of the administration when Secretary of War Newton D. Baker expressed disapproval of the 1916 exclusion bill and praised the military record of the Negro.[17]

During the summer of 1916, the preparedness group gained a practical example for their loyalty appeal due to the service of the Negro Tenth Cavalry in the Mexican punitive expedition, and especially after a skirmish at Carrizal late in June, 1916, in which the Tenth suffered heavy casualties. This was cited as new evidence of the Negroes' loyalty which could overcome prejudice, discrimination and lynchings. They threateningly appealed for an end to racial hostilities and discriminations, by re-iterating the warning that if the United States became involved in a war the whites would be forced to recognize the importance of the black Americans.[18]

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[15]Chicago Defender, October 16, 1915, 3.

[16]Congressional Record, Sixty-third Congress, Third Session, LII, pt. 3, 2827; Sixty-fourth Congress, First Session, LIII, pt. 1, 183; pt. 4, 3721; pt. 12, 13541-13542.

[17]Newton D. Baker to Senator Thomas Taggart, August 30, 1916, Congressional Record, Sixty-fourth Congress, First Session, LIII, pt. 15, 2224-2225.

[18]Savannah Tribune, June 24, 1916, editorial; Chicago Defender, June 24, 1916, editorial.

After Carrizal, Emmett Scott, Secretary of both Tuskegee Institute and the National Negro Business League, who, along with Robert Moton, Washington's successor as President of Tuskegee, was the leading spokesman of the Washingtonian race philosophy, joined the bigoted patriotism campaign. He praised the loyalty of the Negro soldiers that had no taint of being "hyphenated."[19]

The radicals also made use of Carrizal as an argument for equal rights. The National Equal Rights League suggested local citizens' committee be organized throughout the nation to push for full citizenship using the loyalty appeal.[20] However, the radicals were critical of the administration's Mexican policy. DuBois labeled the Carrizal incident a glory for the black men who died for a country that despised, cheated and lynched them, but also for the Mexicans who dared to defend their country from invasion.[21] The stand taken by Secretary of War Baker against the Negro exclusion bill was regarded as an "eleventh hour political concession by the Democrats."[22]

Although making use of the loyalty appeal, some of the radicals were not as optimistic about war service and its rewards. They praised the military record of the black race but also pointed out that it had not resulted in full citizenship in the past.[23] Also the assertion that the black citizens were ready and anxious to serve, without prior evidence of appreciation, was questioned.

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[19]Baltimore Afro-American, July 1, 1916, 1.

[20]Ibid., July 1, 1916, 1.

[21]Crisis, (August, 1916), XII, 165.

[22]Baltimore Afro-American, September 16, 1916, editorial.

[23]Ibid., July 15, 1916, editorial.

> It is taken for granted that the colored people will enlist for the animal love of fighting . . . return home . . . to the limited rights as citizens, to be discriminated against, segregated and lynched.[24]
>
> . . . it appears that the colored people are no more ready to die than the white people. And why should the Negroes fight and die . . . if they cannot vote and not receive the consideration of human beings.[25]

The N.A.A.C.P. split on preparedness. Oswald G. Villard and other prominent leaders were opposed because of their pacifist beliefs. DuBois, in May, 1916, after the passage of a National Defense Act giving the President the power to make increases in the strength of the Army, endorsed Negro participation. He suggested the formation of two artillery and two infantry Negro regiments.[26] A similar proposal had been made to Secretary of War Garrison in December, 1915, by Captain R.P. Root, who had served with the colored Eighth Illinois Voluntary Infantry during the Spanish American War.[27]

With the N.A.A.C.P. endorsement of segregated preparedness there seemed to be a possibility of uniting the efforts of the race leaders. But almost immediately differences appeared. Objections were voiced against segregated regiments. "He /the Negro/ must have it understood that he is an American, not a Negro soldier, and that he is representative of ninety millions, not of ten millions."[28] Some were willing to support the plan if the regiments were commanded by colored officers.[29] The more

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[24]Ibid., June 19, 1915, editorial.

[25]Ibid., July 22, 1916, editorial.

[26]Crisis, (May, 1916), XII, 40.

[27]Chicago Defender, December 18, 1915, 1.

[28]Baltimore Afro-American, June 3, 1916, editorial.

[29]Ibid., July 1, 1916, editorial; August 19, 1916, (quoting Pittsburgh Courier).

militant preparedness element were more concerned and resolute in their opposition to segregation being permitted when it came to "defending a common flag."[30]

Despite differences on preparedness there was considerable race unanimity on President Wilson's foreign policy. Only neutrality proved satisfactory to the Negro leaders. The favorite targets of criticism were the United States' warnings to Germany and Turkey. The colored press expressed the belief that the United States should "put their own house in order," especially lynchings, before judging other nations.[31] The 1915 occupation of strife-ridden Haiti by American marines was condemned and contrasted to the administration policy of merely warning Germany.[32] The disapproval of the Huerta dictatorship in Mexico seemed meaningless to the Negroes, who felt it could be no worse than the "southern dictators."[33]

Even on neutrality the general approval was not without occasional dissent. The seemingly pro-Allied orientation did not go unnoticed.

> England continues to molest the shipping of this country by capturing steamers, searching them and giving annoyance in many forms. To all of these outrages . . . the administration seems unmoved. On the other hand the least action of Germany is vehemently protested against.[34]

As the election of 1916 approached, the Republican colored press became more critical of the neutrality policy. An example of this was

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[30]Chicago Defender, August 19, 1916, editorial.

[31]Savannah Tribune, October 16, 1915, editorial; Chicago Defender, August 28, 1915; August 5, 1916; (editorials); Crisis, (March, 1916), XI, 243; Baltimore Afro-American, September 12, 1914, editorial.

[32]Savannah Tribune, August 28, 1915, editorial; Baltimore Afro-American, August 28, 1915, editorial; Chicago Defender, October 30, 1915, editorial; Crisis, (October, 1915), X, 291.

[33]Baltimore Afro-American, April 25, 1914, editorial.

[34]Savannah Tribune, December 4, 1915, editorial.

the Chicago Defender, which endorsed neutrality in 1915 and again in 1917,[35] but in a November, 1916 editorial announcing support of Charles Evans Hughes, declared Wilson was "simply making cowards of us all in the eyes of the world so that we may have the satisfaction of knowing he kept us out of war."[36]

The Republicans quite naturally enjoyed the Negroes' disappointment, both domestic and foreign, with the Wilson administration. Attempts to regain the rebellious colored voters of 1912 began as early as the spring of 1914. The Boston Advertiser urged the use of Negro disfranchisement in the South as a rallying point upon which the Party could be united.[37] Senator Boies Penrose of Pennsylvania proposed to introduce a bill to bring about enforcement of the Fourteenth Amendment. The colored Pittsburgh Courier, admittedly pro-Penrose and pro-Republican, labeled the bill a hoax and a cheap attempt to rejuvenate the "down and out" Republican Party.[38]

The Republican Negro press reminded the radicals and others who had supported Wilson in 1912, of the promises to the race that had been broken and warned them to beware of being caught again by a "few sops" on the eve of the campaign.[39] Also the independents were informed that since the President was southern born and "a rank southerner at heart," they should have expected that he would surround himself with "demons

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[35]Chicago Defender, February 10, 1917, editorial.

[36]Ibid., November 4, 1916, editorial.

[37]Crisis, (March, 1914), VII, 229.

[38]Ibid., (February, 1916), XIII, 182.

[39]Savannah Tribune, February 27, 1915, editorial.

such as Tillman, Hoke Smith, Vardaman and the like."[40]

The radicals did not need to be reminded of their misplaced faith in Wilson. All of those major race spokesmen who had supported the national Democratic ticket in 1912, with the exception of Bishop Walters, completely repudiated Wilson by 1916. As one radical newspaper summed it up, "any Negro who would vote for him /Wilson/ must be either a fool or a knave."[41] Alexander Walters, undoubtedly, disappointed with the President's patronage policies, nevertheless continued to support the Democratic Party. Apparently his only major objection was that race leaders had not been consulted more frequently.[42]

Although the radicals were bitter in their denunciation of Wilson and the Democrats, the Republican nominee, Charles E. Hughes, did not create much enthusiasm among them. His campaign appeal to the black Americans consisted of one speech made on November 6, 1906, during his campaign for the governorship of New York and a cautious statement to a delegation of colored men in New York City after receiving the presidential nomination. He vaguely outlined his stand as being the "Americanism of equality of opportunity, character and intelligence with no color line."[43] The Republican campaign literature included a summary of Wilson's treatment of the colored citizens. It was written by a Negro, Henry Lincoln Johnson, who served as Recorder of Deeds during the Taft administration. Cabinet members McAdoo, Williams and Burleson along with the President were denounced for instigating segregation. Replacement of

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[40]Chicago Defender, July 29, 1916; September 23, 1916; (editorials).

[41]Baltimore Afro-American, October 28, 1916, editorial.

[42]Crisis, (December, 1914), IX, 74.

[43]New York Times, August 25, 1917, 1; October 9, 1917, 22; December 12, 1917, 7; September 25, 1918, 9; Baltimore Afro-American, November 24, 1917, editorial; January 5, 1918, 1; "Houston Riot," Outlook (September 5, 1917).

colored employees by whites under Wilson was compared unfavorably with Taft's Negro patronage record.[44]

DuBois in October, 1916, presented the situation faced by the radicals and attempted to provide a basis for future political action.

> The Negro voter enters the present campaign with no enthusiasm. Four years ago the intelligent Negro voter tried a great and important experiment. He knew that the rank and file of the Bourbon democracy was without sense or reason, based on provincial ignorance and essentially uncivilized, but he saw called to its leadership a man of high type and one who promised specifically to American Negroes, justice . . . .
>
> They have lived to learn that this statement was a lie . . . .
>
> They are forced, therefore, to vote for the Republican candidate, Mr. Hughes, and they find there little that is attractive.
>
> . . . .
>
> . . . the Negro must expect from him, as chief executive, the neglect, indifference and misunderstanding that he has had from recent Republican presidents.
>
> . . . .
>
> We say nothing concerning the Socialist candidate. They are excellent leaders of an excellent party; God send them success! There is for the future one and only one effective political move for colored voters.
>
> . . . .
>
> It is a move of segregation . . . but self defense knows no nice hesitations. The American Negro must either vote as a unit or continue to be politically emasculated as at present.[45]

The execution of the plan could only be brought about, according to DuBois, by organization in every congressional district of a Negro party to endorse those candidates that would "give the greatest hope for the remedying of the wrongs done the Negro race." And if no such candidate was available the colored citizens should nominate one of their own.[46]

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[44] Republican Campaign Textbook, (issued by the Republican National Committee, 1916), 238, 376-381.

[45] Crisis, (October, 1916), XII, 268.

[46] Ibid., 269.

When Hughes failed to respond to a September questionnaire seeking his position on lynching, disfranchisement, patronage prejudice and race hatred, the radicals were even less enthusiastic over the Republican nominee. DuBois warned the Republicans that they did not yet have "five hundred thousand Negro votes in their pockets." He declared that no Negro could vote for Woodrow Wilson, but that he could vote for Allan L. Benson, the Socialist candidate, or stay at home on election day.[47]

Despite the independents' political frustrations, events were taking place that seemed to offer the potential for future political action. As the world war stimulated American industry and curtailed foreign immigration, the labor demand and higher wages in the North began to attract Negroes from the South. Crop failures in 1915 and 1916 due to floods and boll weevil contributed to the Negro migrations north. Other motivating factors included inadequate schools, lack of political equality and mob violence in the South.[48]

Booker T. Washington shortly before his death in November, 1915, had announced a "go south rural" campaign.[49] However, the radicals praised and agitated for the northern migration,[50] while by 1918 even Washington's successor as President of Tuskegee, Robert Moton, gave his

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[47] Ibid., (November, 1916), XIII, 17.

[48] Crisis, (February, 1916), XII, 179; (March, 1917), XIII, 233; (June, 1917), XIV, 63-64; (Quoting the Montgomery (Ala.) Advertiser, Atlanta Constitution, Charleston News and Courier, and St. Louis Globe-Democrat); (June, 1917), XIV, 77; Emmett J. Scott, Negro Migration During the War (Washington, D.C.; Oxford University Press, American Branch, 1920), 13-25.

[49] New York Times, August 21, 1913, 6; April 20, 1914, 11.

[50] Chicago Defender, August 5, 1916, 6; Baltimore Afro-American, November 18, 1916; November 25, 1916; December 2, 1916; (editorials).

blessing to the movement.[51] The independent press in 1916 and 1917, acclaimed the new economic opportunities as a "second emancipation" and the end of economic slavery for the Negro wage earner. They attacked the Washingtonian advise of "accumulate property," "stick to the soil," "the south is the Negro's best friend" and "back to the farm."[52] DuBois viewed the migration as the only effective way to protest against the lynchings, lawlessness, industrial oppression and disfranchisement in the South.[53]

The political implications of the movement were obvious. As the Negro migrated north he in effect gained suffrage. As early as the election of 1916, the political significance became apparent. Senator John W. Kern of Indiana and several Democratic district attorneys in Illinois and Indiana complained of and charged that vote colonization was taking place. As a result of the complaints, federal and local investigations were launched in Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and New York. Alvin T. Hert, manager of the western Republican headquarters in Chicago, denied the charges.[54]

Therefore, by 1916 the Negro leaders not only were aware of the possible gains from an idealistic atmosphere which a war might produce but also recognized the more tangible and immediate political and economic benefits.

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[51] New York Times, February 1, 1918, 7.

[52] Baltimore Afro-American, July 29, 1916; Chicago Defender, October 28, 1916; August 5, 1916; Savannah Tribune, January 1, 1916; (editorials).

[53] Crisis, (October, 1916), XII, 270.

[54] New York Times, October 18, 1916, 11; November 7, 1916, 3; November 15, 1916, 1.

CHAPTER IV

THE FIGHT TO SERVE

After the election of 1916, the Negro spokesmen again concentrated their attention on the anticipation of service by the race in a time of crisis. The bigoted threatening loyalty appeal to be included in preparedness continued,[1] as did the attacks on the paradox of statements to foreign nations about government by the consent of the governed and protection of humanity, while ten million citizens in the United States were disfranchised and subject to mob action.[2] And the optimism that a war would bring advancement for the race remained strong among some.

> . . . American prejudice is akin to insanity and doubtless a disastrous war with some powerful nation will be the only means of bringing Uncle Sam's children to their senses.[3]

> If a war must come to drive them /the whites/ to their senses, as horrible as it is, let it come. And when the smoke of battle clears . . . perhaps our rightful place . . . will be awarded us.[4]

Late in March, 1917, the Negro advocates of preparedness obtained another practical example for their campaign. On March 25, 1917, the First Separate Battalion, the colored unit of the District of Columbia National Guard, was summoned to guard the water supply system, the

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[1]Savannah Tribune, February 10, 1917; March 10, 1917; Chicago Defender, February 24, 1917; (editorials).

[2]Chicago Defender, February 3, 1917, editorial.

[3]Ibid., March 3, 1917, editorial.

[4]Ibid., March 24, 1917, editorial.

reservoirs and the power plants of the District. Ignoring the reason given by the President that the decision had been dictated by a desire not to affect industrial production in the calling of the Guard, the Negro leaders claimed the real concern was the doubtful loyalty of hypenated white units.[5]

The majority of the N.A.A.C.P. leadership, DuBois, the Republican colored press, and the Washingtonians continued to exert pressure for Negro participation in the preparedness movement. They asserted the loyalty of the black race and maintained hopes of great benefits from a possible war. However, some of the radical press remained doubtful that benefits could be derived from military service or that any great race enthusiasm to serve their nation existed under the prevailing conditions.

> Involvement in a European War would merely postpone the Negro problem for the duration and the loss of the best men of the race would perhaps throw the Negro's cause back a decade.[6]
>
> . . . .
>
> Why should I /the Negro/ be shot in protesting against ruthlessness on the European continent when there is ruthlessness in my home town that I cannot protest too loudly against?[7]

As for the praise given to the extraordinary loyalty of the Negro, they felt this was not necessarily something of which to be proud. "Neither have our domestic animals ever . . . turned against their country. Far be it from them, they have never had sense enough."[8] The extreme radicals differed from the N.A.A.C.P. and DuBois in that they wanted

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[5]Savannah Tribune, March 31, 1917, 1; Baltimore Afro-American, March 31, 1917, editorial; Emmett J. Scott, American Negro in the World War (n. p., 1919), 35-38.

[6]Baltimore Afro-American, March 10, 1917, editorial.

[7]Ibid., February 10, 1917, editorial.

[8]Ibid., March 24, 1917, editorial.

concessions prior to participation and were not content to agitate while eagerly offering their services. Any other position, they argued, was too close to the Washingtonian accomodation attitude.[9] Even after war was declared they, although denouncing any talk of rebellion, demanded full citizenship rights before "going to war willingly."[10]

The major concern of the Negro preparedness advocates in the winter of 1916-1917, and the spring of 1917, was a training camp for Negro officers. Late in 1916 General Leonard Wood offered to establish an instruction camp for potential colored officers beginning in the summer of 1917.[11] The offer drew almost immediate response as Joel Spingarn, the white Chairman of the Executive Committee of the N.A.A.C.P., issued a national call for the Negroes to support the plan.

> It is of the highest importance that the educated colored men of this country should be given opportunities for leadership. You must cease to remain in the background in every field of national activity, and must come forward to assume your right places as leaders of American life All of you cannot be leaders, but those of you who have the capacity for leadership must be given an opportunity to test and display it.
>
> There is now just such an opportunity possible for you, in case of war, to become leaders and officers instead of followers and privates. Major General Leonard Wood, of the United States Army, commanding the Department of the East, has promised that if two hundred of you apply for admission, he will organize and maintain a military training camp for colored men, with just the sort of training to fit you to serve as officers of volunteers in case of war.
>
> I do not believe that colored men should be separated from other Ameicans in any field of life; but the crisis is too near at hand to discuss principles and opinions, and it seems to me that there is only one thing for you at this juncture; and that it is to get the training that will fit you to be officers, however and wherever and whenever this

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[9] Ibid., March 31, 1917, editorial.

[10] Ibid., April 7, 1917, editorial.

[11] Crisis, (November, 1916), XIII, 30.

> training may be obtained. If two hundred of you do not send applications immediately, the opportunity may be lost, forever.[12]

Despite receiving the endorsement and support of the colored educational institutions, including Tuskegee, and of the N.A.A.C.P., DuBois and much of the Negro press,[13] the proposal received opposition from the extreme radicals. They maintained their position of being opposed to any form of segregation in or out of the military notwithstanding periods of emergency or crisis. The argument by DuBois, Spingarn, Colonel Charles Young, the ranking active colored officer, and others, that the separate camp would be the only way Negroes would obtain commissions, had no effect on the extreme radicals.

> If this government cannot discuss principles and opinions so far as they relate to common justice to the Negro when there is no crisis, perhaps a crisis is the best time to get a hearing.[14]
>
> . . . .
>
> . . . the Negro who speaks of duties where he has no rights places himself in the position where he may deserve the name - - a moral coward. Have we regard, respect, reverence, sincere and deep, for this government, then let us speak of duty. Until we have won the political, social and economic freedom that any other citizen of the United States enjoys, we have but one duty, and that is to fight the battle for inner freedom. Our greater enemies are within.[15]

They expressed the conviction that the Spingarn camp would only provide a boost to segregation[16] and hyphenated Americanism.

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[12]Baltimore Afro-American, February 24, 1917, editorial.

[13]Scott, Negro in World War, 82; Baltimore Afro-American, March 24, 1; March 21, 1; Savannah Tribune, March 31, 1917, editorial.

[14]Baltimore Afro-American, February 24, 1917, editorial.

[15]Ibid., March 17, 1917, editorial.

[16]Ibid., March 31, 1917, editorial.

> Though it might seem too idealistic to have mixed regiments, that is what Uncle Sam will be compelled to do, if we are to have a united country. . . . When a separate training camp is established for the Irish, German, Italian, Swede, and all other hyphenated Americans, then, and not until then, will we consider it our duty to support such an organization.[17]

The opposition to the Spingarn plan had little success in discouraging participants, as over two hundred and eighty applications were received by April, 1917.[18] However, those supporting the proposal became uneasy, especially after war was declared, as no official word was received from the War Department relative to the camp. When Spingarn pressed for some action he was told by Wood that the War Department had to approve the camp, whereas the War Department informed Spingarn that General Wood was in complete command.[19] During February and April, three resolutions were introduced in Congress in an attempt to secure authorization for an officers' training camp for Negroes.[20] The Central Committee of College Men, organized to carry the plan into effect, early in May, 1917 aired their views before Congress in a memorandum presented by Senator Gallinger.

> The Negro, a ever, loyal and patriotic, is anxious to do his full share in the defense and support of his country in its fight for democracy. The Negro welcomes the opportunity of contributing his full quota to the Federal Army . . . . He feels very strongly that these Negro troops should be officered by their own men.

The memorandum also summarized the events that led the Negroes to the decision to support a colored officers' training camp. It stated that since the authorization by the War Department of fourteen camps to open on May 14, 1917, for the training of officers, made no provisions

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[17]Chicago Defender, April 7, 1917, editorial.

[18]Crisis, (May, 1917), XIV, 37; Baltimore Afro-American, April 7, 1917, 1.

[19]Baltimore Afro-American, April 28, 1917, 1.

[20]Congressional Record, LIV, pt. 4, 3320; LV, pt. 1, 169, 502.

for Negroes, and since the Department had declared that it was impracticable to admit black citizens to these camps, then the Negro college students and graduates would join the campaign to bring about the establishment of a camp for colored citizens.[21]

On May 8, 1917, the day following the presentation of the memorandum by Gallinger, Representative Murray Hulbert of New York sent a letter to Secretary of War Baker seeking authorization of an officers' training camp for Negroes. One week later Adjutant-General H.P. McCain in a letter to Hulbert stated that such a training camp was under consideration and the details would be released as soon as a decision was reached. The official announcement came in the form of a memorandum from the Adjutant-General's office on May 23, 1917. A camp was to be established at Ft. Des Moines, Iowa, under Colonel C.C. Ballou, Colonel Charles Castle and twelve West Point instructors beginning on June 18, to train 1,250 Negroes as captains and lieutenants for anticipated colored regiments. Two hundred and fifty of the trainees would be selected from non-commissioned Regular Negro officers, with the remaining one thousand being drawn from enlistees or members of the National Guard. Of the two hundred and fifty Regulars the Ninth Cavalry was to furnish twenty-five, the Tenth Cavalry fifty-seven, the Twenty-fourth Infantry eighty-four, and the remaining eighty-four were to come from the Twenty-fifth Infantry.[22]

After the official announcement the Central Committee of Negro College Men, with headquarters at Howard University, and the N.A.A.C.P. intensified their efforts to rally the support of all colored university graduates

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[21] Ibid., LV, pt. 2, 1896.

[22] Ibid., LV, pt. 8, appendix, 246.

behind the camp.[23] Late in July, 1917, the War Department announced that the Des Moines camp would be entirely infantry due to lack of facilities and a shortage of non-commissioned colored instructors.[24]

The strong southern opposition, expected by the colored leaders,[25] against the inclusion of Negroes in the military mobilization failed to materialize, and most of the objections originated within the race. The South did express some concern over the arming of Negroes and the loss of labor due to conscription, especially in view of the heavy Negro labor migration north. And the effect war service could have on white supremacy was noted by the Negroes and southerners alike.[26] Southern opposition was possibly lessened due to the decision by the War Department to have segregated military training.[27]

During the summer of 1917, the agitation by the radicals became more threatening. They demanded restoration of the Civil War colored state militia units and an end to discrimination in the armed forces.[28] DuBois, discouraged by the delay in the incorporation of Negroes into the war mobilization, sounded the dual hope and threat of the race.

> If they do not want us to fight, we will work. We will walk into the industrial shoes of a few million whites who go to the front. We will get higher wages and we cannot be stopped

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[23]Crisis, (June, 1917), XIV, 60-61; Chicago, Defender, June 2, 1917, editorial.

[24]Baltimore Afro-American, August 4, 1917, 1.

[25]Ibid., January 27, 1917, editorial.

[26]"Negro Conscription," New Republic, (October 20, 1917), XII, 317-318; Chicago Defender, April 14, 1917, editorial; Savannah Tribune, April 14, 1; April 14, 1917, editorial.

[27]Baltimore Afro-American, May 5, 1917, 1.

[28]Savannah Tribune, May 26, 1917, editorial.

> by all of the deviltry of the slave South; particularly with the white lynchers and mob leaders away at war.
>
> . . . .
>
> If we fight we'll learn the fighting game and cease to be so "aislily lynched." If we don't fight we'll learn the more lucrative trades and cease to be so easily robbed and exploited. Take your choice, gentlemen.[29]

The militant Republican colored press, the N.A.A.C.P., the independent Negro press and the Equal Rights League were united in firm opposition to the rumored plans for conscription of Negroes for farm labor.[30]

In New York City on July 28, 1917, eight thousand black citizens marched in a silent parade protesting disfranchisement, race riots and segregation. They carried banners pleading with Wilson to bring democracy to the United States before carrying it to Europe.[31]

The extreme radical colored press continued to demand concessions before supporting the war effort. They suggested that the United States "set at liberty /their/ own slaves before recommending liberty for the slaves of other countries," and establish democracy not just for whites and foreigners.[32] Edward Marshall, the editor of the Richmond Planet, a Negro weekly, in commenting on his successful fight to get his paper delivered through the mails after it was held up for "interfering with the mobilization of United States forces," declared:

> . . . I shall consider myself a disgrace to my race and my country by freely volunteering to fight for a Democracy across the sea . . . unless President Wilson assures protection to the 12,000,000 colored people.[33]

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[29] Crisis, (June, 1917), XIV, 62.

[30] Baltimore Afro-American, July 28, 1917, 1; Chicago Defender, July 28, 1917, 1.

[31] New York Times, July 29, 1917, 12.

[32] Baltimore Afro-American, April 28, 1917; May 5, 1917; May 12, 1917, July 7, 1917; (editorial).

[33] Ibid., August 11, 1917, editorial.

In a special editorial Robert S. Abbott, owner and publisher of the Chicago Defender, urged Negroes to take advantage of their new economic power resulting from the labor demand and quit their jobs in protest wherever segregation prevailed.

> If there ever was a time to strike for freedom in its broadest sense, that time is right now. Supply and demand regulate everything; our services are more in demand now than ever before, and the demand will increase as time goes on.[34]

The threats, demands and appeals of the radical spokesman during the spring and early summer of 1917 rested on the hopes that war service would be rewarded willingly or unwillingly, and that the conditions produced by the war would aid the advancement of the race. However, late in May and again late in August, race riots occurred that threatened to nullify the opportunities created by the war and to exclude the Negroes from the future benefits, both economic and idealistic, that the war seemed to offer.

On the night of May 28, 1917, in East St. Louis, Illinois, after more than a month of tension between whites and Negroes over the recent colored migrations to the area, racial clashes began which developed into a major race riot that lasted for five days. Order was finally established on June 4, by twenty-one companies of the federal and state National Guard under the personal supervision of Governor Lowden of Illinois. During the five days, three hundred and ten Negro homes were burned, thirty-three Negroes and four whites were killed. The total damage estimates ran as high as three million dollars. The riot was made worse by the inefficiency, if not cowardice, of the National Guard and several of the city officials. Thousands of the recently arrived Negro workers fled into Missouri during

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[34]Chicago Defender, August 4, 1917, editorial.

the riots.

Protests were sent to Wilson by the Freedmen Foundation, representing twenty-five Negro organizations in Chicago, Dr. Moton of Tuskegee and the N.A.A.C.P., the Equal Rights League and the Baltimore Afro-American placed the blame for the riot on the trade unions who sought to deny the Negro his economic salvation. Theodore Roosevelt inferred a similar charge during a New York City meeting of the American Friends of Russian Freedom organization. Samuel Gompers and other American Federation of Labor spokesmen denied the charges and attributed the trouble to the labor recruiting agents of business. Herbert H. Harrison, president of the Liberty League of Negro Americans, an organization of which Trotter was chairman, during the riots urged Negroes to arm themselves for protection.[35]

The East St. Louis riot commanded Congressional attention on July 5, 1917, when Senator Thomas of Colorado interjected the riot into a debate on prohibition. He reprimanded the American people and press for not denouncing the riot. He compared the disorder to the atrocity of Belgium. The Senator pointed out the necessity of protecting the loyalty of the Negro race in view of the great crisis faced by the country. Senator Sherman of Illinois blamed the International Workers of the World, the criminal element and the "infernal, lawless, and damnable saloons," for the riots.[36]

Four days later on July 9, 1917, Representative Dyer of Missouri introduced a resolution that would authorize the formation of a joint

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[35]Baltimore Afro-American, July 7, 1917, 1; New York Times, May 30, 1917, 6; May 31, 1917, 12; July 3, 1917, 1, 6; July 4, 1917, 1; July 5, 1917, 9; July 6, 1917, 18; July 7, 1918, 1, 4; July 8, 1917, II, 3.

[36]Congressional Record, LV, pt. 5, 4698, 4701.

committee representing the Senate, House and Judiciary, to investigate the causes that led to the East St. Louis trouble and determine remedial legislation.[37] A similar resolution was introduced in the Senate by Sherman. It differed from the Dyer measure in that the committee was to represent only the Senate and House, with five representatives from each. Another House resolution was introduced conforming to the Sherman proposal.[38]

The two leading southern white supremacists in the Senate, Tillman and Vardaman, supported the Sherman resolution but used the opportunity to expand their race philosophy. The South Carolinian blamed the trouble on the I.W.W., who he claimed induced Negroes from the South for the purpose of replacing white labor. Tillman's solution was that the Negro should remain in the South. During his discussion of the East St. Louis riot, Tillman digressed long enough to approve of northern white troops being sent South for training, "because they would learn more about the Negro and like him less as a result."[39]

Vardaman, in announcing his support of the resolution, expressed satisfaction that the American people were being awakened to the fact that the race problem was no longer purely southern or sectiona.[40] Exactly one month later on August 16, 1917, after the Sherman resolution had been reported favorably from committee,[41] the Mississippi Senator cited the

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[37] Ibid., 4879.

[38] Ibid., 5084, 5145.

[39] Ibid., 5150-5152.

[40] Ibid., 5153.

[41] Ibid., LV, pt. 6, 5954.

East St. Louis racial strife as evidence for his racist doctrine.

> Regrettable . . . yes; . . . but on the other hand . . . it is the outward expression, cruel and brutal though it may be, of that inward, dominant, and dauntless spirit of the white man, which would prefer death rather than surrender its superiority ~~or yield~~ in any way . . . to the less favored and . . . ~~inferior~~ race. It is the manifestation of that old quality of Caucasian race pride which has stood guard with drawn sword to preserve the purity of the Caucasian race . . .
>
> . . . .
>
> We are threatened . . . with the . . . effects of the "melting pot" of war, and merging of races, and the enforced equality and solidarity of citizenship.

Vardaman re-iterated his racist warning that "political equality breeds social equality whose offspring is race amalgamation and thus race deterioration which would mean the death of American civilization." He warned of the dangers of arming the Negro, especially in view of the activities of German agents.[42]

While Congress was involved with the Sherman resolution a potentially much greater misfortune, the Houston riot, befell the Negroes who were anxious to reap the rewards of war service. The Houston riot occurred on August 23, 1917, when over one hundred and twenty-five Negro members of the Twenty-fourth Infantry, stationed in Houston, under the command of a sergeant, began indiscriminately to fire at residents because of alleged mistreatment of several members of the regiment by local police. As a result of this action, a riot was started that led to the death of seventeen persons. The army arrested one hundred and fifty-six suspected participants from the Twenty-fourth and moved the remaining members of the regiment to Columbia, New Mexico. Eventually eighteen were hanged

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[42] Ibid., 6061-6067.

and ninety-nine imprisoned for their part in the riot.[43]

The Houston riot created more southern opposition to Negro participation in the military effort than any other event. Southern congressmen and governors, led by Governor Manning of South Carolina and Representative Schley Howard of Georgia, bolstered by home town support from the chambers of commerce, protested any further training of Negro troops in the South and demanded the withdrawal of those already stationed in southern cantonments.[44] Congressman Howard suggested to the War Department that if Negroes were to be trained in the South they should be strictly segregated and white units should be stationed nearby in the event trouble developed.[45]

Due to the pressure exerted on the War Department as a result of the Houston riot, all assignments of colored draftees were suspended on August 29, 1917.[46] Two days later Wilson met with Moton to discuss the situation.[47] Also, the War Department called a conference of Negro leaders and prominent white persons interested in the Negro problem. Those attending the meeting included Moton, Emmett J. Scott, Oswald G. Villard and George F. Peabody.[48] The colored press condemned the rioters but attacked the

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[43] New York Times, August 25, 1917, 1; October 9, 1917, 22; December 12, 1917, 7; September 25, 1918, 9; Baltimore Afro-American, November 24, 1917, editorial; January 5, 1918, 1; "Houston Riot," Outlook (September 5, 1917), CXVII, 10-11.

[44] Scott, Negro in the World War, 75-76; New York Times, August 25, 1917, 1; August 27, 1917, 7; August 28, 1917, 18; August 31, 1917, 4; Congressional Record, LV, pt. 7, 6467, 7243.

[45] New York Times, August 26, 1917, 1, 3.

[46] Ibid., August 30, 1917, 13.

[47] Ibid., September 1, 1917, 5.

[48] Scott, Negro in the World War, 72.

prejudice and discrimination that produced the conflict[49] and urged the Government to stand firm on the policy of sending colored draftees to the South.[50]

On September 8, 1917, the War Department after consideration announced the decision to continue the assignment of Negroes to all cantonments both North and South. They would be segregated in compliance with state laws.[51] Three days later, Secretary of War Baker clarified the Department's position.

> The rule of the regular Army in the matter of training of colored troops, which is that they be trained in separate organizations, will be adhered to. The call for colored men will be postponed until one of the later calls so they will be called at a separate time, giving an opportunity to the officers in the camps to assemble the organizations of which they are a part at once. They will not be the last called but they will be called separately. All colored men called in a state which has a cantonment in it will be organized and trained there. Provision will be made for the assembling of colored troops for training in states that have no cantonments at a later date. An opportunity will be given both the colored and white men among the selected force to volunteer for training in certain lines of communication, organization of which is of a non-combatant nature /:/ opportunity will also be given to colored men to volunteer for combatant service. /sic/[52]

This stand by the War Department was praised by the Negroes anxious to have the chance to exhibit race loyalty,[53] but the extreme radicals viewed the order as an attempt to encourage non-combatant enlistments by the Negro.[54]

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[49]Savannah Tribune, November 17, 1917; Chicago Defender, September 1, 1917; Baltimore Afro-American, September 1, 1917; (editorials).

[50]Savannah Tribune, September 8, 1917; Baltimore Afro-American, September 1, 1917; September 8, 1917; (editorials).

[51]Baltimore Afro-American, September 8, 1917, 1.

[52]Ibid., September 15, 1917, 1.

[53]Chicago Defender, September 15, 1917, editorial.

[54]Baltimore Afro-American, September 15, 1917, editorial.

Several northern Negro units were sent South to train over southern protests and threatened riots.[55] But when the first camp allotments for colored draftees were made on September 22, 1917, the War Department violated the custom of assigning the men to the camp nearest the place of induction, curtailed the quotas for certain southern camps and doubled up in other sections.[56] Southern opposition continued as late as November, 1917. Senator John Sharp Williams of Mississippi in a letter to President Wilson on November 13, 1917, suggested that training camps for Negro troops be established in Cuba.[57]

The dispute over training alarmed those Negroes eager to reap the rewards of service and delayed the actual participation of the colored race in the war. In addition, the controversy probably accounted for the extension of training, from September 15 to October 14, for the prospective colored officers at Des Moines.[58]

Nevertheless, the colored leaders who supported the militant patriotic position by October 15, 1917, could point with satisfaction to the 83,000 black citizens called in the first draft, the 639 captains and lieutenants commissioned at Des Moines, the appointment of a Negro advisor to the War Department and the official authorization of the Ninety-second Division that was to be exclusively Negro except for the staff officers.[59]

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[55]Chicago Defender, October 20, 1917, 1; Scott, Negro in the World War, 77-80.

[56]Scott, Negro in the World War, 72-73; Baltimore Afro-American, September 29, 1917, 1.

[57]Osborn, John Sharp Williams, 295.

[58]Baltimore Afro-American, September 22, 1917, 1 and editorial.

[59]Scott, Negro in the World War, 90-91; Savannah Tribune, October 20, 1917, 1; November 3, 1917, 1; November 17, 1917, 1; Baltimore Afro-American, October 13, 1917, 1.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The radical leaders in 1912 believed they had managed to associate their cause with the reform program of the incoming Wilson administration. However, the belief was shortlived due to the influence of the southern racist sentiment within the Democratic party and Wilson's concern with problems he felt were more important than race relations. It seems that the vague general statements issued by Wilson in the campaign of 1912 did not justify either the enthusiasm exhibited by some of the radical leaders nor the later denunciations of the President.

Despite the disappointment with Wilson the radical movement continued to attract support. The conflicts with Wilson publicized their views and attracted sympathizers from all races. None of the prominent radical leaders had a direct connection with Wilson. Oswald Villard served as liaison man between the Negroes and Wilson. This made it easier for them to repudiate the President and resume their independent political position.

The war conditions provided, at an opportune moment, an even greater idealism than the New Freedom to which the radicals might attach their cause. The hope was partly nullified by the delay and conflict arising out of the incorporation of the Negroes into the military effort. One possible contribution of the war was the decline in racist legislative proposals in Congress. Only seven such measures were introduced from April 4, 1917 to November, 1918.[1] The fact that the Democratic majorities

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[1] Congressional Record, LV, pt. 1, 299, pt. 7, 6930, 6989; LVI, pt. 1, 46, pt. 6, 5325.

were reduced considerably in the 1916 elections might have dampened the hopes of the southern racists. Ironically the great boon to the radicals as a result of the war was an enlarged economic base for the race. The labor demand and the resulting Negro migrations north provided the potential for effective independent political action.

The radicals were disappointed because they failed to receive recognition in the Negro war participation. The Tuskegee group was given the recognition and the responsibility through the appointment of Emmett Scott as special assistant to the Secretary of War. However, the radicals were left free to agitate and to act as critics, thus benefiting from any discontent.

It seems that the radicals might have benefited indirectly from the reform and idealistic atmosphere between 1912 and 1917 since the N.A.A.C.P., the largest independent organization, increased in membership during the period from 320 to 9,282.[2] However, their great desire to identify their aspirations with the idealism and reform spirit was never realized. The death of Washington, migrations north and the organizational efforts could have accounted for the growth of the N.A.A.C.P.

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[2] Wolgemuth, "Wilson and Federal Segregation," 172-173.

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This article served as introductory source material.

Wolgemuth, Kathleen Long. "Woodrow Wilson's Appointment Policy and the Negro," Journal of Southern History (November, 1958), XXIV.

_____. "Woodrow Wilson and Federal Segregation," Journal of Negro History (April, 1959), XLIV.

The two articles by Wolgemuth are the best available on Wilson's Negro policies on segregation and patronage.

_____. "Negro Conscription," New Republic (October 20, 1917), XII.

A brief summary that concentrates on speculations concerning the reasons for southern opposition to Negro conscription.

_____. "Houston Riot," Outlook (September 5, 1917), CXVII.

A good account of the riot and a condemnation of it as a discredit to the otherwise fine record of the Negro soldier.

DOCUMENTS

_____. Congressional Record (104 vols. to date,

Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1873---).

Volumes fifty through fifty-six were consulted to determine the congressional action with regard to the Negro race. These volumes included the proceedings of the Sixty-third, Sixty-fourth and Sixty-fifth Congresses (April 7, 1913 to November 21, 1918).

NEWSPAPERS

The position and ideas classified as radical were drawn from the editorials of four Negro publications; Crisis (N.Y.), Chicago Defender, Baltimore Afro-American and Savannah Tribune. The Crisis and the Afro-American were two of the more important radical publications. Others not available include the Boston Guardian and the Cleveland Gazette. The Chicago Defender met all of the requirements except that it did not favor indepependent political action. The Tribune was generally more cautious than the other three except on preparedness. The standards for radical classification were taken largely from editorial judgment by DuBois in the Crisis.

Crisis (N.Y.), November, 1913 to June, 1918.

Chicago Defender, January, 1915 to June, 1918.

Savannah Tribune, January, 1915 to December, 1919.

Baltimore Afro-American, August, 1913 to July, 1919.

New York Times, January, 1913 to September, 1918.

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