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SOUTHERN PROPAGANDA

Recently the following open letter was issued by James Weldon Johnson bearing upon the race riots in Washington City and Chicago, which is so full of meat for thought that the same is herewith reproduced:

There has been for a number of years a well-directed propaganda, issuing principally from the South, which has had as its purpose placing the brand of rapist on the Negro race. This propaganda has been partly successful in establishing in the public mind the idea that there is the direct relation of cause and effect between rape and mob violence against the Negro.

Whenever the Negro protests against lynching nearly all southern newspapers and a great many northern newspapers call upon him to deprecate the crime which leads to lynching. The authentic statistics of lynching prove the falsehood on which this propaganda is based.

In the twenty years down to 1903 there were 1,985 Negroes lynched in the Southern states. Of that number rape was assigned as the cause in only 675 cases. In 1,310 cases other causes were assigned. In the past thirty years fifty Negro women have been lynched. In the past twelve months five Negro women have been lynched. In the five-year period, 1914-1919, 264 Negroes were lynched in the United States, exclusive of those killed at East St. Louis, and of this number rape was assigned as the cause in only 28 cases.

Contrast these records, bad as they may appear, with the records for New York county, which is only a part of New York city, and we find that in this one county, in the single year of 1917, 230 persons were indicted for rape by the grand jury. Of this number 37 were indicted for rape in the first degree. That is, in just a part of New York city, the number of persons indicted for rape in the first degree was nine more than the total number of Negroes lynched on the charge of rape in the entire United States during the period 1914-1918. Among these 37 persons indicted by the New York county grand jury there was not a single Negro. The evidence required by the grand jury of New York county to indict a person charged with rape must be more conclusive than the evidence required by a mob to lynch a Negro accused of rape.

When the congressional committee on immigration in 1911 made its study of crime in the United States an investigation was made of 2,262 cases in the New York Court of General Sessions, and in that investigation it was found that the percentage for the crime of rape was lower for the Negro than for either the foreign born or native born whites. The actual figures were for foreign-born whites, 1.8; for native-born white, .8, and for Negroes, .5.

The echoes from the Washington riots are a present illustration of how this propa-

ganda against the Negro works. The newspapers have been filled with attacks on white women as an excuse for the riots, and these 'attacks on white women' are now being used by Southern papers as an excuse and justification for the first acts of the white mob. A retired judge of the Superior Court of North Carolina, writing on the Washington riots in the Wilmington Dispatch, speaks of Negroes seizing automobiles and riding and snorting through the streets of Washington while the raping "went merrily on." What are the facts?

According to the date of Major Pullman, chief of police of Washington, there took place in the District of Columbia, between June 25, 1919, and the outbreak of the riot, one case of rape and three cases of attempted rape. The first case of attempt was on a colored school teacher. In three of these cases the suspect was one man, and he was in jail when the riots broke out. No publicity was given to the fact that five weeks before the riots two white men, a motor-man and a conductor on a street car, attempted rape upon two colored girls, who were the only passengers in the car when it reached the end of the line. These two men are now under heavy bail.

I repeat that there is a direct plan of propaganda on the part of the South to brand the Negro with being a rapist in order that he may be robbed of all sympathy and public interest when he is lynched and mobbed. The truth is, the Negro is not more addicted, and is perhaps less addicted, to rape than any other group in the country.

EDITORIAL PARAGRAPHS

Old Booze is beating it to China as a last resort. Probably he hopes to drive the Japs out of Shantung.

The rich oil fields of Mexico may have much to do with the brewing war with Mexico that is heard of in England and United States circles.

European women have become infected by the suffrage bug and are making a stand for universal suffrage—that is if America and Europe mean the universe.

Perhaps Uncle Sam is endeavoring to head off Old Booze, who has already sailed for the Orient, which prompts him to dispatch an army officer in an airplane to China.

Chicago's grand jury that struck for white gore has indicted twenty-five colored and twenty-one white rioters—not quite "hoss and hoss," but almost.

Unless much precaution be used, Mexican bandits are liable to steal the most of our leading army officers stationed near the borders and either get big boodle for their return or force them to become bandits.

That's some political maneuver on the part of Governor Hart to call an extra session of the legislature to ratify the woman suffrage amendment to the United States Constitution. If Hart does not now get the women vote then of course they will be absolutely helpless.

Owing to the discovery of oil near West Columbia, Tex., Charles Brown, who owns 1,000 acres of timber land in the oil belt, on which oil wells are now flowing, is so

rich that he may fill the financial place recently left vacant by Carnegie. Mr. Brown is an ex-slave.

Doubtless war is brewing with Mexico and if murdering United States citizens is responsible for the war brewing announcement, then this is no new brew, but the same old brew that has been brewing since the last war with Mexico was closed, which gives every evidence of going to die while brewing.

A New York husband (white) has sued his wife for an absolute divorce and named Bert Williams, the noted colored comedian, as co-defendant. Bert has the money and Dempsey may yet get a wad of it from the sabled son of the footlights, which is more profitable than getting him lynched by a thousand miles.

"Too much gold in the world," argues a British financier, and "Too much food in the world," argues an American trust hog. In the past, trust hogs have been destroying food in order to keep prices up and now we suspect the money hogs will go to destroying the gold in order to be able to control the entire money supply.

In answer to the anti-Negro propaganda attempted to be spread in France by the United States soldiers, recently the French Chamber of Deputies adopted a resolution condemning race prejudice and affirming the absolute equality of all men without regard to race or color. And now Frenchmen spoiled Negroes may be consistently burned at the stake as have been the French women spoiled ones.

That recent appeal to the Negroes who have left the South by the southern farmers "to return to their former homes at their expense" will not find a response. In distress, the southern white man is an angel without wings, so far as the colored man is concerned, but once out of trouble and he immediately becomes the same intolerant murderer that he has always been so far as the Negro is concerned. The Negro knows him of old.

RACE RIOTS

Race riots bring no prestige to any city. Neither Chicago nor Washington need hang its head unduly, however, for it was only the good fortune of a dozen or more large cities that prevented similar disorders elsewhere. The same fires of discontent with a world where the Negroes gives everything and receives little more than nothing in return are as ready to flame forth in Pittsburgh or Philadelphia as in Chicago. So long as we proceed upon the theory that the black man must enjoy only the crumbs of a white civilization, just so long are petty incidents like those that started the Chicago or Washington riots liable to release tensely controlled passions and bring on pitched battles between the races.

There is no royal road to racial peace. Even in that day when the laborer shall receive the full social product of his labor and when all artificial barriers to work shall have been removed there will still remain traces of old hates. Racial hatred, like all hatred, is born of fear. Those who talk about the black menace or the yellow peril are merely thinking of the possibility of