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NEGROES' RIGHTS

Rev. A. Clayton Powell, in a Recent Sermon, Tells Negroes to Wage Bloodless War for Their Constitutional Rights

The Negroes of the United States should wage a bloodless war for their rights at this crucial period of the country's history, was the opinion expressed from the pulpit by the Rev. A. Clayton Powell, pastor of the Abyssinian Baptist church of New York City, at Sunday's services.

Dr. Powell's views follow:

"In my opinion, this is the proper time for us to make a special request for our constitutional rights as American citizens. The ten million colored people of this country were never so badly needed as now. They are not only needed in the factories, business firms, and on the farms, to produce the necessities of life, but they are needed to help keep the Mexicans quiet, to help sweep the commerce destroying submarines of the Central Powers from the oceans, to help crush German militarism, and perhaps they will be needed sooner than some people expect to prevent the Japanese from landing on these shores to ask for a redress of their grievances which have been piling up for the past few years.

Get Assurances of Better Treatment.

"As a race we ought to let our government know that if it wants us to fight foreign powers we must be given some assurance first of better treatment at home. Perhaps some will say that this is an inopportune time for such talk. Some may argue that to demand our rights now, when the nation is perhaps facing the greatest crises in its history, would show a lack of loyalty and patriotism. Those who make such arguments are not acquainted with the rise and development of races.

All history will prove that most oppressed people have secured their rights when their oppressors were facing a crisis.

The Irish people thoroughly understand this philosophy of history and they are now making a supreme effort for home rule. This effort is being made at a time, too, when the English government needs all of its men and all of its resources to fight enemies on land and sea; and everything indicates that the Irish are going to get the independence for which they have been seeking for years, because they know how to seek at the proper time.

"Four hundred thousand railroad employees secured eight hours' work with ten hours' pay the other day because they threatened to walk out on a day when America needed every single car and every railroad man in the country. At a normal time the American people would not have yielded so readily to their just demands.

"For centuries the common people of Russia have been depressed and crushed by plutocracy and absolutism. In vain they have attempted to secure their liberties in times of peace, but a few days ago when surrounded by foreign foes these people rose up en masse and accomplished the complete overthrow of the colossal rotten superstructure of the Romanoff dynasty, and in twenty-four hours succeeded in abolishing all racial, social and religious distinctions. The new government has already assured the entire Russian people of their political freedom and equality before the law.

Government Has Stood By With Arms Folded.

"Why should not the colored Americans make a bloodless demand at this crucial time for the rights we have been making futile efforts to secure for the past fifty years, instead of hurrying telegrams and special deliveries to Washington assuring the government that has persistently stood by with folded arms while we were oppressed and murdered that the ten million Negroes may be used as targets for German bullets and shells?

"It would not cost the President, governors and representatives a single cent to ask, in their speeches and messages, the American people to abolish 'Jim-Crowism,' segregation, and the awful lynching institution, and give to colored men political equality; but it would mean a new birth of freedom for ten million people who have always stood ready to give their life's blood to perpetuate American institutions.

"In spite of all that the big Negroes are saying to the contrary, this is the psychological moment to say to the American white government 'from every pulpit and platform and through every newspaper, 'Yes, we are loyal and patriotic. Boston Commons, Bunker Hill, Gettysburg, Fort Pillar, Appomattox, San Juan Hill and Carrizal, will testify to our loyalty. While we love our flag and country, we do not believe in fighting for the protection of commerce on the high seas until the powers that be give us at least some verbal assurance that the property and lives of the members of our race are going to be protected on land from Maine to Mississippi. Let us have the courage to say to the white American people, 'Give us the same rights which you enjoy, and then we will fight by your side with all of our might for every international right on land and sea.'

"If this kind of talk is not loyalty, then I am disloyal; if this is not patriotism, then I am unpatriotic; if this is treason, then I am a traitor. It is not that I love Caesar less but these black Romans more, who have been true to the flag for two hundred and fifty years. It is infinitely more disgraceful and outrageous to hang and burn colored men, boys and women without a trial in the days of peace than it is for Germans in time of war to blow up ships loaded with mules and molasses."—New York Age.

Chicago, Ill.—The famous Pekin Theatre, located at 2700 South State, is now a dance hall. A license has been issued to Dan Jackson. No liquor will be sold in the hall. Ten years ago the Pekin Theatre, conducted by "Bob" Motts, was one of the show places of the "Windy City."

PRESIDENT WILSON'S MESSAGE TO CONGRESS.

IT is the general opinion of the people, the press and every unbiased and unselfish mind in America that President Wilson's address to a joint session of Congress last Monday evening in which he asked the Congress to declare that a state of war exists between the United States and the German government and to make provisions to prosecute the same to a successful issue which will insure a lasting peace for the world, is a great historical document, taking its place with our revered President McKinley's message bringing about the Spanish-American war and securing the freedom of Cuba from the tyranny of Spain. The following excerpts from the speech of the President proves that the "watchful waiting policy" carries with it honor, sympathy for weaker nations and support to the cause of righteousness, and as we are brought face to face with an enemy who spells destruction not only to the people of Europe but to the citizens of the civilized world if victory is theirs, we must do our part in supporting to the last the Chief Magistrate of our country, who has stood the test for more than two and a half years with a patience almost beyond reason.

"Gentlemen of the Congress," said the President, "I have called the Congress into extraordinary session because there are serious—very serious—choices of policy to be made and made immediately, which it was neither right nor constitutionally permissible that I should assume the responsibility of making." After dealing in full with the ruthless German submarine warfare, the broken promises of Germany in her correspondence with this country as to the rights and privileges of neutrals, the plots from German governmental source aiming at a destruction of the unity of this nation, and a reviewing of the recent Russian revolt showing that our entrance into the war is for the preservation of a world democracy, the President concluded his address in the following: "It is a distressing and oppressive duty, gentlemen of the Congress, which I have performed in addressing you. There are, it may be, many months of fiery trial and sacrifice ahead of us. It is a fearful thing to lead this great peaceful country into war, into the most terrible and disastrous of all wars, civilization itself seeming to be in the balance. But the right is more precious than peace, and we shall fight for the things which we have always carried nearest our hearts—for democracy, for the right of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own governments, for the rights and liberties of small nations, for a universal dominion of right by such a concert of free peoples as shall bring peace and safety to all nations and make the world at last free. To such a task we can dedicate our lives and our fortunes, everything that we are and everything that we have with the pride of those who know that the day has come when America is privileged to spend her blood and her might for the principles that gave her birth and happiness and the peace which she has treasured. God helping her, she can do no other."

This message—a declaration in behalf of universal justice and common humanity—is fraught with no selfish purpose, is not suggestive of a war of conquest or oppression, but rather a maintenance and an enlargement of the liberties and rights of mankind, and therefore entering this conflict as we do with the indorsement of our President's recommendation by the Senate and the House of this special session, we go fearlessly to add another chapter in American history in our contribution of victory over wrong and restoration of A WORLD PEACE.

AMERICA AND EASTER OF 1917.

ONCE again the great festival of the Christian world comes round which will be celebrated possibly in the usual manner but with a phase of sadness experienced in Christendom for nearly three years owing to the terrible war which has almost ruined Europe and now is brought to America. We were not unmindful of the possibilities attendant with this great struggle that was assuming larger proportions as the days rolled by, and thinking that the blessings of peace would be ours for another year we continued our practical sympathetic help to the nations that have faced starvation and endured other privations of indescribable features. The oft-repeated expression, "This is a world's war," the general comment by numerous Christians, "This is a fulfillment of one of the prophecies," have not fallen on deaf ears, as the latest statistical account of the religious bodies of the world has shown a remarkable increase, and one begins to wonder whether this is not the great means to the end that the nations of the earth shall come under one Kingship, obedient to one Lord, serving one Master in the carrying out of the greatest commandment, "Love one another." What a uniform world, what a oneness of action, what a unitary method forming the grandest possession of our lives, if that commandment would be obeyed! Think every man from the depth of his heart faithfully carrying out this injunction: every woman from the recesses of her soul following zealously this doctrine: every child being trained to adopt this as the axiom of its life; then, in spite of all the rigors of war, accompanied by its tremendous horrors and cruelties, we could on Easter Day (tomorrow) blend our thoughts and harmonize our feelings as a great whole for one common cause—THE GOOD OF HUMANITY.

SCHOOL AND CITY COUNCIL ELECTION.

THE school election for three members of the School Board and the city election for members of the City Council will take place next month, the former on May 7, and if the city and county of Denver must come up to the standard of other educational centers of the United States, the electors must endorse men who will feel the weight of responsibility attached to the position, give us a system that we can be proud of, and eliminate from our school government every power or agency that is bent on strife and turmoil—the lot that has been ours, unfortunately, with the present board. The men picked by the Civic and Commercial Association of Denver are meeting with general support, and having no political axe to grind, being characters who are known by the people of Denver to have the educational development of its citizens at heart, their election by a large majority would begin to insure success along new lines, strengthening the arms of a superintendent who, in spite of opposition, added many features to our school system that are highly commendable. The Colorado Statesman urges every elector to engage in a little sacrifice and find some time during the day Monday, May 7, to cast their vote which means so much to our advantage in fighting an issue on the side of a majority of the people. The city election will be vigorously fought, and watch our columns closely for the candidates that are sure to be elected. In succeeding issues a full account will be given as to their position and interest in our city's welfare.

RACE NEWS

GATHERED FROM VARIOUS SOURCES

Raleigh, N. C.—The State Legislature has appropriated \$165,000 for race development. Of this amount \$25,000 has been given to the Negro Agriculture and Technical College, which has an enrollment of 529 pupils.

Washington, D. C., March 27.—The first Separate Battalion of District of Columbia, was ordered into service to guard the Capitol, Sunday. This Battalion is a colored unit of the National Guard, and recently returned from the Mexican border, where they won an enviable record for efficiency. The battalion is commanded by Major James E. Walker.

Durham, N. C.—A memorial to the spirit of service of the ante-bellum Negro soon will be erected here in the form of a hospital for Negroes. James B. and Benjamin N. Duke, New York tobacco manufacturers, announced a gift of \$40,000 for the purpose and the remainder of the \$50,000 requested has been pledged. The Dukes, it is said, will endow the institution.

Richmond, Va., March 30.—In the case of W. E. Knox and Allo L. Wilson, executors of Joseph N. Winfield, against the heirs-at-law of Winfield, the Supreme court refused to grant an appeal from the decree of the Essex circuit court, entered Aug. 15, 1916, holding that certain paper offered by the executors as the last will and testament of Winfield was not his true will. The property will, therefore, pass to the heirs-at-law. Knox and Wilson were named as executors in the will, which was admitted probate in 1913. This instrument bequeathed to Mary Wilson Winfield's mulatto housekeeper, and her eleven children all the property of which the testator died possessed. The latter was a white man who never married. During his life, however, he freely acknowledged Mary Wilson's children to be his own, cared for them and sent them to school.

Chicago, April 1.—The war spirit of Chicago Negroes was voiced at a mass meeting today in Bethel church. Resolutions were adopted urging the president and congress to be unwavering in dealing with Germany and promising the support of all Negro citizens of Chicago. The

greatest enthusiasm was shown during the speech of Col. Franklin A. Denison, commander of the Eighth Illinois Infantry, colored. "What we want is men, men, men, and we want them now, not tomorrow or next day," he said. "And when our men are entrusted with the American flag, the people of the United States may know that that flag will be flying in the front rank, in the hardest fighting, until the last Negro soldier is dead."

Washington, D. C.—The story is told of three Howard University sophomores who offered to join the navy. When they asked what service would be required of them they were told they would be assigned to the "mess department"—that is, to the dining room service. The young men sadly turned their faces toward Howard University Hill way and "beat it." They were not burning with desire to serve the nation in war times as servants for naval officers, and they were quite right about it. Such service is good enough in its place and way, but not for young men of education who should be able to serve the government as others do and be in line to receive the honors and emoluments usually awarded for meritorious services. This condition of affairs cannot very well always exist, but is bad enough in all conscience now in the army and naval service.

Cleveland, O.—The embarrassment and humiliation to which prominent colored members of the Y. M. C. A. residing in Ohio were subjected a short time ago at a dinner given at the new Deshler Hotel continues to be the interesting theme for discussion among colored people throughout the State of Ohio. When Y. M. C. A. officials having the dinner in charge try to explain they make matters worse. Among those invited to meet John R. Mott of New York, general secretary of the Y. M. C. A., were Howard Gillard, Robert B. Baracus and Dr. A. Howard and Nimrod Allen, secretary of the local branch, all of Columbus; Drs. Jordon and Pettiford of Springfield and Secretary Dunbar of the Cincinnati branch. When dinner was served it is reported that the colored men were seated at one table and the Greek waiters refused to serve them. Finally a colored bellboy waited on them.