

Describe in laymen's terms (make it simple) the status of the Negro according to Frazier. Be sure to engage ideas/concepts from the related reading assignments. Write 300 words at a minimum! Remember proper spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and good grammar are required for college level writing.

Below you will find the reading.

The Status of the Negro in the American Social Order E. FRANKLIN FRAZIER

INTRODUCTION Some sociologists have drawn a distinction between the position of a group or an individual in the economic order and the status of an individual or group in the social order.' According to this view, in a competitive society as distinguished from a society based upon caste, the place of an individual in the economic organization is determined by the efficiency of the individual or group in the performance of some particular economic function. On the other hand, status in the social order, i.e., the relations of superordination and subordination and control, is determined by "rivalries, by war, or by subtler forms of conflict." The distinction which these sociologists have made between the position of an individual or group in the economic order and the status of an individual or group in society tends to obscure the fact that the latter is dependent upon the former; for in the final analysis the status of an individual or group is determined by his or its position in the economic organization. The rivalries, the wars, and the subtler forms of conflict which determine the status of individuals and groups or the relations of superordination and subordination and social control in society are due fundamentally 1 Robert E. Park and Ernest W. Burgess, Introduction to the Science of Sociology. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1924, p. 574. to the conflicting economic interests of the classes within the economic organization. As we discuss the various aspects of the status of the Negro in the American social order we shall see the inherent relationship, in spite of apparent exceptions, between the Negro's position in the economic organization and his status in the social order. SLAVE STATUS The introduction of the Negro into America was due to the economic expansion of Europe.² As this expansion involved the rapid exploitation of the resources of a Virgin continent, some form of forced labor was required. America was, to use the term Nieboer applied to those regions of the world requiring slavery or forced labor for their development, a region of "open resources."³ Before Negro slavery became the sole source of forced labor white servitude supplied this need. Indeed, it seems reasonable to conclude from what we know of the circumstances under which Negro slavery became established in America that Negro slavery owed its origin to the fact that it proved a more efficient form of forced labor than white servitude. Herrick has pretty well established the thesis that white servitude 2 Abram L. Harris and Sterling D. Spero, "Negro Problem," The Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, 11: 335-336. 3 H. J. Nieboer, Slavery as an Industrial Institution. The Hague: Martinus Mijhoff, 1910, pp. 385-387. 293 This content downloaded from 108.86.106.32 on Sat, 10 Jul 2021 04:33:31 UTC All use subject to http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp

THE JOURNAL OF NEGRO EDUCATION was responsible for the disappearance of Negro slavery in Pennsylvania while Negro slavery caused the decline of white servitude in Virginia.⁴ One fact seems clearly established relative to the slave status of the Negro in America; namely, that the Negroes who were first introduced into the colonies had the same status as the indentured white servants. Moreover, it seems

unquestionable that the status of the indentured servants reflected the decaying feudal relations of Europe while the slave status grew up in custom and became fixed in legal decisions. These customary practices and legal decisions, of course, grew up in response to the needs of the planter class for a secure labor supply. It may appear strange to those who are accustomed to think that ties of race are more decisive in social and economic development than economic interests to learn that the crucial legal decision making a Negro indentured servant a servant for life or a quasi slave was secured in 1653 by a Negro planter, who was probably one of the original twenty Negroes brought to Virginia in 1619. However, it was not legislation which determined the fate of Negro slavery in the colonies. The fate of Negro slavery was determined by economic forces. By the end of the seventeenth century, tobacco had become indispensable to the economic welfare of the colonies and Negro slavery proved to be more profitable than white servitude. Law, custom, and religion then gave legal and moral justification for Negro slavery. Likewise, if the fate of Negro slavery had been dependent entirely upon the economic rôle of tobacco in the colonies, it would probably have died out; for towards the end of the eighteenth century tobacco had declined in importance. This fact appears to be a better explanation for the favorable attitude towards emancipation during the Revolutionary period than the so-called outburst of idealistic sentiment. For we know that the invention of the cotton gin in 1793 soon drowned out whatever emancipation sentiment had gained currency among Southern planters. Just as tobacco had decided the status of the Negro during the Colonial period, cotton culture determined the course of development of the institution of slavery and the status of the Negro until the Civil War. Whatever differences existed in the status of the Negro in the various parts of the South, are traceable to the influence of cotton and the plantation system. Religion, law, and learning became the supporters of slavery as the profitable exploitation of the slave system was pushed to its limits. In Mississippi where the plantation system almost completely dominated the whole economic life, the Supreme Court ruled that the laws of the state "presume a Negro prima facie to be a slave."⁵ On the other hand, in the State of Virginia where cotton could not be profitably cultivated, owners of slaves engaged in the profitable enterprise of supplying slaves to South Carolina, Georgia, and other Southern states. The presence of that anomalous class, the free Negroes, was definitely bound up with the institution ⁵ Charles S. Sydnor, "The Free Negro in Mississippi Before the Civil War," *American Historical Review*, 32: 773, JA 1927. This content downloaded from 108.86.106.32 on Sat, 10 Jul 2021 04:33:31 UTC All use subject to [http://www.jstor.org/terms](#) THE NEGRO IN THE AMERICAN SOCIAL ORDER 295 of slavery. In Mississippi there were only 773 in 1860; while in the State of Virginia the free Negro class grew from 47,348 in 1830 to 58,042 in 1860. Nothing shows more cogently the primacy of economic factors than the difference between the status of the Negro in these two states. In both states there were laws against the increase in the free Negro population. In Virginia the free Negro class increased in spite of the law, because the economic basis of slavery was being undermined. Many of the Negroes who were legally held as slaves were permitted to hire their time and carry on a semi-free existence. But as the cotton kingdom swept towards the Southwest, the law in Mississippi only tended to confirm what was a fait accompli. Although in their zeal to sanctify and justify slavery, the defenders of the system, both lay and religious, attempted to prove that the Negro did not belong to the human species, the institution of slavery had to take some account of the fact that the slave was a human being. It

would have been more convenient for the planters if these "animate tools" of production had not been so human. But, as it was, the character and exigencies of the slave system determined whether or not the Negro slave was treated like a human being. In the slave trade the Negro became a mere utility. And when the human interests of the Negro were opposed to economic considerations, as in the division of an estate among heirs, the humanity of the slave was ignored. On the large plantations where there were no personal relations between the great body of slaves and the planters, slavery assumed the character of a purely industrial institution and the "animate tools" of production were treated more like cattle. But on the smaller plantations where the slave owners had personal contacts with their slaves, slavery was more than an industrial institution; it was a social institution as well. We are concerned here with the development of slavery as a social institution for the light that it throws upon those traditional attitudes and customary practices which have been bound up with the status of the Negro. Wherever slavery developed into a social institution it recognized individual differences and provided a social milieu in which the personality of the slave took form. The division of labor on the plantation offered an opportunity for the expression and development of individual talent. Moreover, in spite of the fact that the law made no distinction in regard to the slave status, within the world of the plantation there were differences in the status of slaves. These differences were recognized on the part of both the slaves and the masters. In fact the high degree of social control that developed under the institution of slavery is an evidence of the extent to which the slaves assimilated the mores of the slave system. Negro slavery in the South presented in many cases the apparent paradox of an extreme intimacy existing alongside of the unabridgable social distance that was necessary between master and slave. The slave no less than the master accepted the difference in status. The slave knew his "place" and was punctilious in his observance of the etiquette and the other forms of behavior which accorded with his subordinate status. The slave was inclined to despise the master who got out of his "place" as much as he despised the poor white who had no status. The master on his part accepted the slave as a part of the moral order and showed no hostility towards him as long as he remained in his "place." The attitudes and sentiments that accorded with the different rôles which master and slave played in the institution of slavery became too deeply rooted in both to be torn up in even the cataclysm of Civil War and Reconstruction which swept away much of the economic foundation that supported the institution. EMANCIPATION AND RECONSTRUCTION In spite of compromises the industrial North and the agricultural South finally sought in the arbitrament of arms the settlement of their irreconcilable interests. This decision came at the moment when the Southern planter class through its control of the national government had almost completely submerged the opposing interests of the industrial North. Therefore, when the Civil War effected the triumph of the industrial North over the Southern planter class, the destruction of Negro slavery, which had sustained the planter class, followed as a natural consequence. In their hour of triumph the representatives of Northern industry and finance made sure that the supremacy of the class they represented would be firmly established. In giving the Negro, with the aid of military force, equal political and civil status with their former white masters and the landless poor whites, they secured the victory of the Republican Party which represented the interests of the expanding capitalism of the North. But when the power of the planter class had

been completely broken and power had passed into the hands of the rising financial and commercial classes, the North abandoned the Negro and let the South determine his future status. At the close of the Civil War the provisional state governments accepted the Thirteenth Amendment only because they thought that resistance to it would be futile. Therefore, their acceptance of the Thirteenth Amendment did not imply that they had changed their belief in the complete social and economic subordination of the Negro. The desire on the part of the South to perpetuate the social subordination of the Negro was apparent in the "black codes," which were supposedly designed to limit the vagrancy of the Negro, who naturally regarded freedom of movement as the crucial test of his emancipation. Although the fundamental purpose of these laws was to protect economic interest in that they attempted to secure a dependable labor supply, they were nevertheless designed with the intention of maintaining the traditional pattern of social relations. These efforts to keep the Negro in a state of quasi slavery naturally resulted in violent conflicts between the races. The poor whites whose white skins were then the mark of superiority to the black freedmen, as well as the former master class, resented any claim on the part of the Negro to social equality. The Freedmen's Bureau which was planned as a rational device for helping the Negro in his transition from servitude to the state of freedom was resented not merely because some of its agents were tactless or venal, but primarily because it attempted to see that the freedman was treated as a citizen in the courts and protected from fraud and cruelty in his dealings with his employers. In the end, the determination on the part of the South to perpetuate the economic and social subordination of the Negro afforded abundant justification for the program which the Radical Republicans adopted for the reconstruction of the South. During the decade following the initiation of Congressional Reconstruction, the force of the military arm of the federal government was responsible for whatever social, economic, and political equality the Negro was permitted to enjoy. So far as intimate association between the two races on terms of equality was concerned, no amount of coercion could effect a change in the traditional relations. When the freedmen attempted to assert their right to equal accommodations in public places, they were either violently ejected or the whites offered passive resistance by withdrawing from such places. The Civil Rights legislation, which was subsequently declared unconstitutional, proved ineffectual as a means of preventing discrimination against the Negro. The program for giving the Negro an economic basis for his free status was scarcely more successful than that for securing him his civil rights. The oft-ridiculed dream of the freedman that he was to receive "forty acres and a mule" was realized by only an insignificantly small number. Even if the relatively small amount of abandoned lands, which had been entrusted to the Freedmen's Bureau, had been given to the freedmen, it would have made little difference in their economic status. But as it turned out most of the land was returned to the former owners and the freedman found himself as dependent upon the white owning class as he was during slavery. In only one respect did the presence of federal troops assure the liberated Negro equality for a time; that was in the matter of political participation. But the equality which was granted the Negro in the use of the ballot was not designed to bring about any revolutionary change in his economic status but was given to him for the purpose of maintaining the Republican Party in power. The South responded to the attempt to give the Negro equal social, economic and political equality with violence and terror against the freed-

man and his white allies. When the white South found itself powerless to oppose, through legal channels, the granting of equal status to the Negro, it expressed its opposition through the Ku Klux Klan and similar organizations. The activities of these organizations were directed not only against the Negro's attempt to enjoy civil and political equality, but Negroes were driven from the fertile land, their school houses were burned, and their leaders were murdered. In the end, the consolidation of the white South against the Negro and the Radicals and the turn of political events in the North, which culminated in the contested Hayes-Tilden election, gave the white South complete control of the Negro's destiny. Only during the agrarian movement when the poor whites were pitted against the large planters and the financial interests, was the solidarity of the whites broken. But even in this conflict the poor whites often turned their hatred against the Negro as the supporter of the Bourbons.

FIXING THE STATUS OF THE NEGRO IN THE SOUTH

If we should attempt to date significant periods in the development of the Negro's status, we might say that the year 1895 marked the subsidence of the conflict between whites and blacks that was brought about by the Negro's struggle to attain equal status with the whites in the South and the fixing of a new pattern of race relations. By 1896 the agrarian movement, which brought about a division among the whites and made the Negro once more a significant figure in politics, had completely collapsed and the whites were united again on the political exclusion of the Negro. It was in 1895 that the new form of accommodation between the two races was so dramatically signaled in the well-known speech of Booker Washington in which he announced his formula for the future relations between the two races. The oft-quoted formula ran: "In all things purely social we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress." This formula as in the case of all social formulas which are supposed to harmonize conflicting interests had different meanings for the two contending parties and their supporters. At the very time when Washington was announcing his formula, the South was giving content and meaning to the phrase "all things purely social." With Mississippi setting the example in 1890, seven other Southern states between 1895 and 1910 disfranchised the Negro through changes in their constitutions without violating the Federal Constitution.⁶ During the past generation it was customary for the representatives of the Old South to reflect regretfully upon the passing of the cordial relations which existed between the white masters and the black slaves.⁷ It is undoubtedly true that emancipation and reconstruction destroyed to a large extent the modus vivendi which the two races had worked out in the South during slavery. Some of the violence and terror that characterized the period following the Civil War was a natural consequence of the breakdown of the traditional and accepted pattern of race relations which had enabled the two races to carry on a common life. As a matter of fact, after the conflict between the two races subsided and the Negro acquired a place in the new social order, he no longer had the status of a slave which the whites had endeavored to force him to accept nor had he succeeded in acquiring the status of a free citizen. As the Southern whites gradually regained power in the seventies, they began to legislate concerning the place of the Negro in the social system. The withdrawal of federal troops by Hayes in 1877 removed the last vestige of federal opposition to the policy which the South intended to pursue in regard to the Negro. Although the

6 Paul Lewison, *Race, Class, & Party*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1922, p. 88. 7 Cf. George T. Winston, "The Relation of the Whites to Negroes," in *America's Race*

Problems. New York: The American Academy of Political and Social Science, 1901. This content downloaded from 108.86.106.32 on Sat, 10 Jul 2021 04:33:31 UTC All use subject to [http://www.jstor.org/terms](#)

THE NEGRO IN THE AMERICAN SOCIAL ORDER 299 association of the races in public schools had been tolerated to some extent, separate schools became the rule soon after the beginning of Reconstruction. The freedmen who were guided by one of the philanthropic foundations in surrendering their right to attend any public school, soon learned that in giving up this right they had lost a strategic advantage in bargaining for equal educational opportunities.⁸ When the conservative whites, who represented the owning classes in the South, regained power they were inclined to give the poor whites and Negroes the same educational facilities; but when the poor whites came into power around the nineties they paid no heed to the educational needs of the voteless blacks. In fixing the status of the Negro the South attempted to erect what amounted to a caste system. Therefore, first of all, they legislated specifically against intermarriage where any doubt concerning it had arisen during the troublous Reconstruction period.⁹ Then followed the Jim Crow laws requiring separation on railroads and street cars. Of course, there had been Jim Crow laws in some of the states under the provisional state governments but these had been removed during Reconstruction. In 1881 Tennessee led the way in legislation requiring separate accommodations on railroads. By 1891 eight other states had passed similar legislation; and from 1898 until 1907 five other Southern states fell into line.¹⁰ The important fact to bear in mind in regard to these legislative acts, which were designed to maintain the separation of the races, is that the purpose of this legislation was to fix the status of the Negro in the social order. It was not due, as some people have mistakenly understood the motive behind such legislation, to any physical repulsion against intimate contacts with Negroes. The slave-owning whites in the South had been accustomed for generations to close association with the blacks; but during slavery there was no question concerning the terms of association. Even the poor whites, who on the whole had not been accustomed to close association with the blacks, were concerned with fixing the status of the Negro rather than erecting barriers to prevent an intimacy that was physically repulsive. Therefore, these laws which attempted to maintain the separation of the two races were designed to "keep the Negro in his place." The caste system, which the South during this period was endeavoring to bring into existence, was reflected in all the relations between whites and blacks. Negroes were simply excluded from such places as hotels, theatres, and restaurants where their very presence symbolized equality of citizenship with the whites. In the courts whenever the Negro did not appear as a criminal or an offender against a white man, he appeared as a suppliant asking for favors from the ruling caste but never as a citizen with equal rights with the whites. In order to maintain itself as a superior caste the white South saw that the Negro was shorn of political and economic power. How the white South through every form of fraud and violence deprived the Negro of political power is a well-known story. Literacy and educational tests, poll taxes, and "Grandfather clauses" were simply the legal trap-pings of the ill-concealed force that was always at hand. In the sphere of economic relations the white South during this period saw that it was unnecessary and

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ill-advised to resort to legislation, as it did immediately after the Civil War under the provisional state government, to prevent the Negro from engaging in certain businesses and occupations. There were other means of perpetuating the poverty of the Negro which in the last analysis put him in the white man's power. White labor, which was thrown into competition with Negro labor, was able to set up a distinction between "white men's jobs and Negro jobs." And white employers did not fail to use to their full advantage the threat of displacement when white labor became intractable. Finally, during this period there developed a social ritual and an etiquette governing the intercourse between the two races. As the ritual and etiquette that had regulated relations in ante-bellum days died out, new forms came into existence. The ordinary democratic titles, such as "mister," were reserved for the white race. Even the poorest white man was zealous to see that the rituals governing race relations were observed.

THE PRESENT STATUS OF THE NEGRO IN THE SOUTH

When we come to discuss the present status of the Negro in the South, we should bear in mind that, although his status was fixed on the whole in law and custom around the opening of the present century, the latent conflict which persisted under the forms of accommodation that were established still showed itself from time to time in sporadic outbursts. Although lynchings, which serve as a rough index to racial conflict, declined after 1895, they were numerous enough until 1910 to indicate that violence was still considered a necessary instrument for keeping the Negro in "his place." Moreover, it should be kept in mind that, with the subsidence of conflict between the two races on a larger scale, there still persisted minor forms of conflict which issued in new forms of accommodation. Therefore, we find that the pattern of race relations, while possessing an underlying configuration, exhibits numerous variations in the South. Moreover, as the South is losing its agrarian character through industrialization and urbanization, the question of the Negro's status is acquiring a new meaning. There are signs that the question of the status of the Negro is losing its purely racial character and is becoming tied up with the struggle of white and black workers against the white landlords and capitalists. The separation of the races in the South today, both legal and customary, can be understood only if one realizes that it is a means of forcing the Negro to accept an inferior status. A Negro may be found in any place or in any degree of physical closeness with the whites if he is known to have any inferior status. In most cases he must wear the badge of his inferior status such as the chauffeur's uniform or the maid's cap and apron. If he does not wear such a badge he is precluded from occupying an inferior status. A Negro nurse may sit in the hotel dining room beside her charge or a chauffeur may sit in the car beside his mistress; but a Negro passenger may not ride in a railway coach with a white passenger. A Negro servant may ride in an elevator with white passengers, but a Negro doctor or lawyer would be forcibly ejected and even murdered if he resisted. While the Southern white man may appear illogical to an outsider when he makes such distinctions as those noted above, he is nevertheless behaving according to the logic of a system of social relationships which involves the relationship of superordination and subordination. Thus, even the poorest white girls may pile upon their Negro servant who drives them home in a carriage, and yet refuse to ride in the coach with a Negro passenger. A white man may live with a colored woman by whom he has children and insist that there shall be no "mixing" of the races. What he means is, of course, that there shall be no "mixing" of the races on terms of equality, or that no matter what degree

of physical intimacy may exist, the proper social distance must be observed. Where such a basic pattern of relations between whites and blacks exists it will become clear why democratic justice in the courts is impossible in spite of the abstract legal formulations. On the whole, it is impossible for a Negro to get justice in the courts of the South. In the police courts every form of brutality is practiced. A Negro man or woman of any degree of education and culture, even when arrested for a traffic violation may be clubbed into unconsciousness by the degenerate poor-whites, who form the police force of the South. To these poor-whites the Negro is an animal; for the poor-whites have none of the sentimental attitudes of the slave-owning aristocracy and their descendants. A case which the writer witnessed within the past decade in Atlanta gives some idea of the Negro's status in the police courts of the South. An innocent Negro dentist, with his head bandaged because of a brutal clubbing, was brought into court after spending the night in jail on the charge of disorderly conduct on a street car. Two policemen boastfully told the judge that they had beaten him until he was unconscious. After the victim produced witnesses, including the street car conductor, who testified that he had no part in the disorder, he was held by the much amused judge for the grand jury on the charge of inciting a race riot, while a policeman without authorization or any due process of law dragged a Negro witness to jail where he was held incommunicado. Although lynchings have decreased in recent years, one should not get the idea that it indicates a significant improvement in the treatment of the Negro in Southern courts. In addition to the lynchings which continue in the South, violence is still widely practiced upon Negroes who get out of their "place." A Negro may be chased out of town because he refuses to advocate lower wages for Negro workers than that received by whites, or a Negro doctor may have his home burned because it is "too good for a nigger to live in." In such cases it is impossible to get legal redress. Within recent years it was considered a significant improvement in the status of the Negro before the law when a white man was given a light sentence for wantonly murdering an innocent Negro boy. In the sphere of politics the status of the Negro has scarcely changed since the opening of the present century.¹¹ During recent years the Negro vote has occasionally been a significant factor in municipal politics. The Negro has attempted to exercise political power chiefly by entering the white primary. But the only place where he has made any real impression has been in Memphis, where about 35,000 Negroes were registered in 1930. Even in Memphis the Negro's political power has been used chiefly to adjudicate the conflict over economic interests between the different sections of Tennessee. The recent Supreme Court decision which declared the Texas Democratic Party to be a private organization and thereby had the right to exclude Negroes indicates that the path to political power through the white primary offers no promise to the disfranchised blacks. There has always been a small group of white people in the South who have believed that no final peaceful settlement of race relations could be achieved through the complete subordination of the Negro. These liberal white leaders have believed that, while the two races should maintain their biological integrity and social separateness, the Negro should be given an opportunity to develop a civilization parallel to that of the whites. This point of view was expressed a quarter of a century ago by Edgar G. Murphy in his book, *The Basis of Ascendancy*, as follows: There is no place in our American system for a helot class. Our country is a democracy; and, whether

we will or no, we are the inheritors of a Constitution. This is the second irreducible factor of our problem. Not only is the negro a negro, and not only is that fact among the realities, but it is also among the realities that the re-creation of our institutions and the transformation of the political and social assumptions of our age are not among our privileges. Nor are such enterprises among our conjectures or desires. We want no fixed and permanent populations of "the inferior." We may in every personal or social sense desire separation-that is an issue of personal reserve. It trenches upon no legal or social right. It inflicts no degradation of personal, industrial or political status.¹² In another book published five years earlier, he had set forth a similar idea. The clew to racial integrity for the Negro is thus to be found, . . . not in race suppression but in race sufficiency. For the very reason that the race in the apartness of its social life is to work out its destiny as the separate member of a larger group, it must be accorded its own leaders and thinkers, its own scholars, artists, prophets."³ This same position is taken today by Willis D. Weatherford in the recent book, *Race Relations*, on which he collaborated with Charles S. Johnson. Mr. Weatherford speaks sentimentally about the distinctive contributions which the Negro, among the different races, which he likens to the 100,000 varieties of flowers, may make to American civilization. At the same time, Weatherford attempts to give

¹² Edgar G. Murphy, *The Basis of Ascendancy*. New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1909, p. 233. n Edgar G. Murphy, *The Problems of the Present South*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1904, p. 274. This content downloaded from 108.86.106.32 on Sat, 10 Jul 2021 04:33:31 UTC All use subject to <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

scientific support to his position by indicating that we do not know whether the results of race-crossing are desirable or undesirable. Dr. Park, who approaches the question of bi-racialism as an objective student of social changes rather than an advocate of a program, makes the following statement concerning the significance of bi-racialism for changing the status of the Negro in the South: Originally race relations in the South could be rather accurately represented by a horizontal line, with all the white folk above, and all the Negro folk below. But at present these relations are assuming new forms, and in consequence changing in character and meaning. With the development of industrial and professional classes within the Negro race, the distinction between the races tends to assume the form of a vertical line. On one side of this line the Negro is represented in most of the occupational and professional classes; on the other side of the line the white man is similarly represented. The situation was this: All white All colored It is now this: White Colored Professional occupation Professional occupation Business occupation Business occupation Labor Labor The result is to develop in every occupational class professional and industrial bi-racial organizations. Bi-racial organizations preserve race distinction, but change their content. The distances which separate the races are maintained, but the attitudes involved are different. The races no longer look up and down: they look across. These bi-racial organizations, so far as I know, are a unique product of the racial struggle in this country; they do not exist outside the United States.¹⁴

¹⁴ Robert E. Park, "The Bases of Race Prejudice," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 140: 20, N 1928. When we view the present situation in the South, there is evidence that a growing number of whites are inclined to favor a bi-racial organization in which differences in the status of the Negro will be given recognition. In fact, many of the liberal whites who comprise the interracial committees make much of the social differentiation in the Negro group and are disposed to treat Negroes according to their relative status in the Negro group.

The relations between the two races under the bi-racial conception of race relations range from ceremonialized "good will" meetings and hand-shaking to genuinely human associations on the basis of mutual regard and mutual interests. But the significance of such relationships may be and, as a matter of fact, are over-rated, so far as they are supposed to affect the actual status of the Negro. On the whole, the people who comprise the interracial committees are sentimental in their attitudes toward the Negro, and, what is more important, either do not possess power, or do not care to use it, in changing the status of the Negro in any fundamental sense. From the standpoint of the Negro group there is evidence that social and economic stratification is gradually taking place among Negroes. But here too there is a tendency to overestimate the significance of this development for a change in the status of the Negro. During the years preceding the crash in 1929, many Negroes and some of their white sympathizers regarded the development of Negro business as a sign of the economic emancipation of the Negro. This optimism was a reflection of the program and philosophy of Booker T. Washington and the National Negro Business League. The facts concerning the actual economic development of the Negro did not support such optimism. While it was true that around a fourth of Negro farmers were owners in 1920, the great mass of Negroes in the South were tenants and sharecroppers. There was no industrial proletariat of sufficient size to support even the small Negro businesses. The present economic crisis has revealed the insecure basis upon which these enterprises were built, and has convinced all but the most naive advocates of Negro business of the impossibility of erecting a separate economy behind the walls of segregation. The economic dependence of the Negro in the South furnishes the key to the understanding of his status. No amount of "good will" can effect a change in his status as long as he remains in his condition of complete economic dependence upon the whites. A good example of how economic factors rather than sentiment determine, in the final analysis, the status of the Negro was furnished in the case of the codes for the steam laundries. A professor in a Southern university who boasted of his "good will" towards Negroes and membership on an interracial committee made a trip to Washington to argue before the code authority against paying laundry workers, most of whom are Negroes, more than fourteen cents an hour. Thus, first, we have the steam laundries taking the work away from the Negro washer-woman through propaganda concerning the unhealthy surroundings of the black washer-woman and, then, the professional "good willers" helping the steam laundries to keep their black workers on starvation wages. The Negro white-collar worker and the intellectual are as dependent economically as the Negro wage earner. Negro teachers in the public schools, both local and state, hold their jobs only so long as they do not oppose the present pattern of race relations. In some of the state schools Negro teachers have to appear in menial garb at least once a year when the legislative committee visits the school. This act of subordination consists in some cases in waiting on the white folk when they are served an annual dinner. Even in the privately-supported schools there is no escape from subordination to the Southern whites, for Northern white philanthropy is no longer disposed, as after the Civil War, to support Negro educational institutions that do not "cooperate" with the local whites. The Southern Interracial Commission is becoming more and more an extra-governmental agency of control over the Negro. This power is exercised through its control of Negro colleges and universities. The Negro intellectual leadership of the South,

so far as the educational institutions are concerned, has no more independence in guiding the destinies of the Negro than a Negro driver on a Southern plantation before the Civil War. In concluding our discussion of the present status of the Negro in the South, it is necessary to call attention to certain factors which will in time affect the whole character of race relations. First, it should be kept in mind that the urbanization and industrialization of the South is progressing rapidly. In the next section we shall take up the discussion of the effects of urbanization on the status of the Negro. Here we shall merely call attention to the fact that the industrialization of the South in such areas as Birmingham is developing an industrial proletariat among Negroes. The increasing conflict between the workers and the employers is forcing the Negro to make common cause with white workers. Perhaps, the most promising signs of the growing solidarity between the workers of the two races have appeared recently in the sharecroppers unions in Arkansas. While one can not say how far-reaching such cooperative efforts will extend, one seems justified in saying that such movements indicate that the Negro's struggle to change his status in the South will be bound up in the future with the struggle between white and black workers and sharecroppers and the white landlords and capitalists.

THE EFFECTS OF URBANIZATION ON THE STATUS OF THE NEGRO

Cities at all times have been the birthplace of freedom. The very nature of the urban environment has made it impossible to subject men to the same restrictions as those placed upon men bound to the soil. The movement of Negroes to the city has had a similar effect upon their status. Even Negro slaves who lived in the cities of the South enjoyed more freedom than those on the plantations. During slavery the free Negro population was concentrated for the most part in cities. In the urban South today, it is impossible to enforce the racial taboos which one finds in the rural areas and the villages. For example, a Negro man may be beaten or murdered for brushing against a white woman in a Southern village; but on the streets of Southern cities this is a daily occurrence that goes unnoticed. The urbanization of the Negro has acquired significance since the opening of the twentieth century. Since then, over a million Negroes have migrated to Southern cities; while a million and a half have gone to urban areas of the North. In 1930, 43.7 per cent of the Negroes in the country were living in cities as compared to 22.7 per cent in 1900. An important fact in regard to this movement to urban areas of the North is that the migration has been to the large industrial areas. In 1930, 30.8 per cent of the Negro population was living in metropolitan areas. One of the important effects of the migration to cities on the status of the Negro has been the increasing stratification of the population, especially in Northern cities. For example, a comparison of the Negroes engaged in professional pursuits in Northern cities with the same class in Southern brings out some important differences. Whereas in 1930 in Southern cities over half of the professional group was composed of clergymen, in Northern cities clergymen comprise a little more than a tenth of the professional class.⁵ But by far the most important class which has come into existence in the Northern urban environment has been the industrial proletariat. For it is this class which is changing the character of the struggle of the Negro for status.

15 E. Franklin Frazier, "Occupational Classes Among Negroes in Cities," *American Journal of Sociology*, 35: 718-38, Mar 1930. This content downloaded from fff:fff:fff:fff:fff:fff on Thu, 01 Jan 1976 12:34:56 UTC All use subject to <https://about.jstor.org> 306 THE JOURNAL OF NEGRO EDUCATION

Before the migration of large numbers of Negroes to Northern industrial centers

during the period of the World War, the majority of Negroes in Northern cities were engaged in domestic and personal services. The smallness of their numbers and the nature of their employment left the matter of their status an unimportant issue. The "old families," a large proportion of whom were mulattoes, took special pride in the fact that they enjoyed considerable freedom in the use of institutions, which were available to the citizens of these communities. But when large masses of illiterate, uncouth Negroes from the plantations of the South inundated the slum areas of these cities and encroached upon white settlements, the question of the status of the Negro became a burning issue. As is well known, clashes between the races resulted from this sudden disturbance of the social equilibrium. The Northern whites initiated a policy of exclusion and segregation as a means of allaying conflict between the two races. But this was not as easy to accomplish as in the South; and we find, therefore, that the question of the status of the Negro in the North is still unsettled. Many of the older mulatto settlers in Northern cities were as hostile towards the Negro migrant as the whites. A number who were able to "pass" sought refuge in the white race. The very fact Negroes in Northern cities are able to "pass" for whites or Spanish Americans, or Indians is an indication of the way in which the anonymity of city life enables the Negro to escape from the status which was imposed upon him in the Southern agrarian environment. Many more remained in the Negro communities and developed a racial consciousness that was unknown to them before the advent of the Southern Negro. The race riots helped to develop this race consciousness. In fact, the development of race consciousness among the migrants, as well as among the older settlers, was one of the outstanding results of the movement to Northern cities. The growth of race consciousness on the part of the Negro masses has produced a degree of group solidarity that has become a powerful force in the Negro's struggle for status. The Negro has exerted the force of his numbers in Northern cities chiefly through the use of the ballot. While the Negro in the Northern urban environment does not enjoy all the rights of citizenship, he undoubtedly enjoys more freedom in these cities than in any other part of the country. This freedom is due to some extent to the fact that he has political power. The Negro's status in Northern cities is not commensurate with his political strength, so far as his numbers are concerned. This is due in part to the fact that the Negro's political power does not function in relation to the economic interests of the masses. The great mass of Negro voters act in accordance with sentimental appeals. The few rewards which go to Negro leaders have chiefly a symbolic value, aside from the economic value to the recipients. For their votes, Negro workers do not receive even the opportunities to work at menial tasks, which often constitute the patronage of white political bosses. Only in recent years, since the economic crisis This content downloaded from 108.86.106.32 on Sat, 10 Jul 2021 04:33:31 UTC All use subject to [http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp](#) THE NEGRO IN THE AMERICAN SOCIAL ORDER 307 has driven many Negro workers to regard politics from a realistic standpoint, have they attempted to seek concrete rewards for their votes. This recent development is changing the character of the Negro's struggle for status in the Northern environment. Although at present this realization of the relationship between politics and economic realities has brought about confusing and contradictory movements and tactics, there are signs that the Negro workers are acquiring an understanding of their place in the economic order and an appreciation of the necessity of their cooperation with white workers. This new orientation and, at the same time, confused outlook are seen in the case where Negro workers forced their political leader to displace white workers, and are evident in the present program of boycotting stores where

Negroes are not permitted to work. On the other hand, there is a growing number of cases in which Negro workers are cooperating with white workers in a common struggle against employers. CONCLUSION Our brief review of the development of the Negro's status in the United States has brought out the fact that it has been bound up, in the final analysis, with the role which the Negro has played in the economic system. Since he has been, on the whole, in a position of economic dependence upon the whites, he has continued to occupy an inferior status. The fallacy of the belief that emancipation from economic dependence upon the whites could be achieved through the building up of a separate economy behind the walls of segregation is becoming apparent, even to those Negroes who have no fundamental understanding of the economic structure of the modern world. The migration of Negroes to cities has brought about considerable emancipation from the system of control that characterized an agrarian society. But so far, the power of the Negro masses has not been utilized to improve their economic status which is at the foundation of their social status. The Negro is gradually learning that the status of a group is dependent upon social and economic power, and that "good will" on the part of sentimental whites will not help him. In the urban environment he is showing signs of understanding the struggle for power between the proletariat and the owning classes, and is beginning to cooperate with white workers in this struggle which offers the only hope of his complete emancipation.