

# A White South, or Black?

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*An eminent Southern Democrat pleads for White primaries in the South as the alternative to Negro rule and a recurrence of disorder and bloodshed*

THE South has never been betrothed to the Democratic party. It has long been wedded to the cause of White Supremacy. The Houston Convention refused to recognize these two salient facts. It received its answer on November 6, 1928.

The staggering vote polled by Mr. Hoover throughout the eleven States of the old Confederacy fills me with concern. I am not writing as a Democrat. That party, as such, means comparatively little to me. I am not speaking as a Catholic, although I appreciate the force of the blow my fellow churchmen have had as a result of the religious strife awakened by the candidacy of Governor Smith. It is solely as a Southerner that I am raising my voice.

There has been a break in the solid White phalanx of ten States which until 1928 had never wavered in their allegiance to Caucasian domination. The rent is as evident in the Commonwealths that voted for the New Yorker as it is in those that went for the Californian. It must be repaired. And this work should be undertaken at once. If conditions be left as they are, blood will flow, sooner or later.

It will serve no useful purpose to put the blame on the Irish for having defied the South. It will mean nothing to indict Simmons, Heflin and Co. for treason. The thing to do is to work for a remedy. And it is of primary importance to take cognizance of the gravity of the peril.

BE THE cause what it may, there are today in each Southern State two White Groups. At the present moment they may or they may not be officially extending their hands to one another. Their leaders, both men and women, may now, perhaps, be singing a "let's get together" chorus. But they have tasted blood. Never again can they be what they once were — as long as human nature remains what it is.

This condition carries in its wake the imminent peril of bloodshed or of Negro rule. I do not mean as an eventual hypothesis. I mean as an immediate, present, impending catastrophe.

It will be recalled that the ten "solid" Confederate States have a large Negro population. So has Tennessee. That Commonwealth, however, is not a "solid" Confederate

State. It gave Andrew Johnson, General Thomas and Admiral Farragut to the Northern cause. It has two Congressional Districts which are as rockribbed Republican as any sections of Vermont. It has, in the past, played truant to the Democratic cause, in State and National elections. I, therefore, eliminate it from the unadulterated South. The former impregnable strongholds of Democracy controlled their blacks. They constitute the South within the meaning of this discussion.

The Southern White man has not always exercised this "control" in the same way. At one time he used the white sheet of the original Ku Klux Klan. At another, bullets. Then again, any old form of intimidation. But he gradually evolved from such types of persuasion. He ceased to be militant and became metaphysical. He fell back upon Constitutional subterfuges. And then Mississippi pointed the way when she evolved the principle of White Primaries. But this beneficent practice is not applied to National elections.

VIEWED from the quiet complacency of one's comfortable armchair, all of these earlier remedies fill one with horror. But life is a condition and not a theory. Reconstruction was a nightmare which had to be dealt with as a living reality. The slaves of yesterday had been given the franchise. They were, as a class, good men. They proved this during the Civil War, when the Southern White man deserted his plantation to defend his frontier. There were, however, recreant scalawags and unspeakable carpetbaggers who turned this ebony mass from docility to aggression and

from virtue to crime. The North of those days was deaf to reason. Forced to decide between Black Government or violence, the Southerner chose the latter.

And just about the time when the Negro came to realize that a ballot and an autopsy had something in common, the country at large got into the frame of mind that permitted it to refrain from attacking the various Southern suffrage Constitutional provisions. The vocalized Black and allied elements of the South accepted this situation with a self satisfaction that amounted to suppressed enthusiasm. When 1928 hove into sight, all Southerners, regardless "of race, color or previous condition of servitude", lived together as a happy community.

THE White element was satisfied because it was in the saddle. No blood stained its hand on election day. The inarticulate Black cohorts were contented because their longevity was not subjected to any untoward curtailment. Their "life, liberty and pursuit of happiness" were safeguarded by officials, courts and public opinion. And the assertive, truculent, oleaginous Negro politicians were delighted, because this arrangement reserved the Federal pie to a small coterie. They raised just about enough of a protest to keep their names in the foreground of Harlem. They willingly sacrificed their chances of poorly paid State or county jobs to the certainty of remunerative Federal patronage.

This is another way of saying that the small clan of Southern Black-and-Tan — as well as Lily-White — beneficiaries of Republican victories is, at this juncture, more than probably perfectly willing to let well enough

alone. The danger comes from the United White army of yesterday. It has broken with its traditional principles. It has disintegrated. Should all of the old Southern Democrats of before 1928 seek to get together again, they could not do so. The G. O. P. has tasted the sweetness of votes from Dixieland. Its hereditary opponent had too long fattened on this morsel not to clamor for another helping. This implies that when 1932 and succeeding years come around, both parties will fight for the coveted prize of "Solid South" Electoral support.

WITH the XVth amendment still a part of the Constitution of the United States, and with assertive Negro minorities scattered throughout many of the Northern States, it is an illusion to imagine that the Republicans of the Nation will seek to buy the favor of Southern Whites at the price of officially repudiating the Blacks. Should the Hoover forces do so in an open and unmistakable manner, then one may be certain that the Democrats of the North will forthwith champion the cause of the colored citizen with as much enthusiasm as they did that of Protection in the campaign that has just ended. There are too many black men and women north of Mason and Dixon's line for their influence not to be sought, should the followers of Lincoln throw past traditions to the winds.

All this means that African votes are destined to remain for years a cloud upon the Southern horizon. Should White Southerners continue to divide among themselves, it will become dark and menacing. And I am afraid that it will burst.

I say this because education and

thrift have made such progress among the Blacks of the South that menacingly large numbers of them can now legally answer to any Constitutional provisions that the Courts would declare valid. There is, accordingly, an avalanche of potential Negro votes which remained dormant when the Southern White body stood as a unit. I fear that White competition for office will turn this quiescent and latent force into a moving and irresistible body.

I fear that Southern Whites will create or revive the conditions that existed during Reconstruction days because I think that I know something of human nature. Once the Caucasian element of the South divides on Presidential issues — and it so divided on November 6, 1928 — the thirst for office and the ardor of conflict will cause politicians to cast eyes at those unregistered Black votes. There will be Twentieth Century scalawags. They will lie awake nights until they work out a way of getting those ballots.

THIS practice will, at first, take place only in isolated instances and at widely scattered points. It will be introduced just as slowly and as cautiously as one puts one's hand into a new glove. But, in time, what the Germans call a *bandschub* goes on easily. So will it be with the custom of offsetting White votes for President by Black ballots. And this means that this select Black Brigade, whether it be large or small, will sooner or later hold the balance of power in the ten "solid" Confederate States. This result will be as inevitable as the Call of Doom, and will beget an awakening which will spell bloodshed.

If I am mistaken in advancing the

hypothesis that human nature will urge the divided White men of any given Southern State to angle for African suffrage when a President is to be chosen, then there are still those Northerners, Easterners and Westerners in the woodpile. They, in their hunger for ballots, assuredly will have no compunction about flooding the South with money. They, whether they be Republicans or Democrats, will play the part of tempter and seek to find means of registering this somnolent but highly volatile vote. It will take shot guns — or latter day Ku Klux Klan methods — to drive such political scouts into cover.

ALL of this means that the XVth Amendment has made of each unit of the real South a one-party State. It is immaterial whether that party be called Democratic or Republican. It is no concern to Louisiana whether Mississippi be Republican or Democratic. It means nought to Mississippi whether Louisiana be Democratic or Republican. All that interests Louisiana and Mississippi is that all White citizens within the borders of each State be members of one single political party.

This is not an ideal condition. I deplore it. I, however, both unreservedly and willingly accept it as the lesser of two evils. The alternative to it is, I repeat, Black domination or bloodshed.

To attenuate the misfortune of a condition that became inevitable when passion thrust the ballot upon the Negro, the States of the South have adopted far-reaching primary laws. These statutes place party elections under the control of the respective States. They circumvent the spirit of

the Federal law. They respect its letter. They allow, as a practical proposition, a fight within the ranks of, for example, the Democratic party to settle all elections affecting State, municipal and county affairs.

I shall not seek to elaborate the mechanics of these laws. Suffice it to say that in my State, Louisiana, the statute provides that no one may vote at the primary of a given party who, at the time of registering, has not declared that "he is affiliated with" that specific party. The Democratic party, as a self-governing body, restricts participation in its primaries to White Democrats.

Public opinion and long settled practice allow any white man or woman, not a Republican office holder or standing candidate for a G. O. P. position, to register as a Democrat and to vote in a Democratic primary. The election is looked upon as a white man's fight. How participants, not holders of remunerated State, parochial or municipal posts, vote for President, interests no one. I know bank presidents who supported Harding and Coolidge and who are wheelhorses of the State Democracy. Everybody understands their position. They are, in State affairs, one-party men. They cast a Platonic vote for President every four years, but always support Democratic Congressional and Senatorial nominees.

THE number of those who before 1928 voted in this way was comparatively small. The point is that these White primaries, as they prevail in Louisiana, did not ostracize such White voters who could not subscribe to the tenets of the Presidential candidate of the Democratic party. This is

but another way of saying that while technically for many years the South has had, in State affairs, a one-party system of government, the evil resulting from such a situation has been attenuated to a very appreciable extent. It is this modified form of one-party rule that I advocate as a means of escape from the dilemma now confronting the ten Southern States.

IT WILL, perhaps, be urged that no primary could validly submit, let us say, both a "Hoover" and a "Smith" ticket to its one-party electorate. This objection fails to consider the genesis of the Constitutional provision governing the choice of a President or of a Vice-President. It brushes aside the wishes of the Fathers.

The framers of our organic law did not contemplate making of the Electoral College a rubber stamp body. They visualized a double-barreled procedure. It was their idea that the people should choose as Electors agents in whom they placed implicit confidence, that all of the men so selected should meet at a given date and after full and free discussion designate for President and Vice-President the two men in whom all of this assembled wisdom placed its trust. The conception of a "Hoover" ballot and of a "Smith" ballot was foreign to the spirit of the Great Charter.

The original intention of the Constitution will be respected if the names voted for officially be those of citizens eligible for election by the primary. The fact that it may be known that one list, if chosen, will vote for "A" and the other for "B" is beside the point. Both groups of electors will fulfil the legal requirements if they are made up of White electors duly registered as

members of the party under whose auspices the family fight has been staged.

I realize that certain of the ten States may require new legislation to make all of this feasible. It is requisite, I urge once more, that party affiliation be understood in a very loose sense. It must contemplate just that degree of nominal fealty that makes unadulterated White blood, for all practical purposes, the sole test. The working out of the mechanics of such statutes will, no doubt, call for skilful draftmanship. But the game is worth the candle.

THERE are further reasons which emphasize the wisdom of this proposal. It would do more than cut out the Black vote. It would rivet attention upon the South. Northern orators — and campaign funds — would pour into these primaries. We should be courted by both Republicans and Democrats. No one would dare to talk of reducing our Congressional representation. Our rivers and harbors would be improved. Federal buildings would be given to us. The best posts in the Judiciary and in the Foreign Service would be tendered to us.

Maine would no longer be a barometer, as we would come desperately near to being the arbiter of the election. I do not care how the various Southern States may become aligned. Party advantage does not interest me. Nor does the fact that such a change will put the South in the news and keep it there for many weeks. What I am seeking to do is to avert the bloodshed which menaces the various Southern States now that an issue has been found where their White phalanx has become a thing of the past.



# The Master of Ballyhoo

BY JACK KOFOED

*Tex Rickard's colorful career in putting the Prize Ring into the Social Register and into the realm of High Finance*

IT IS strange that our greatest master of ballyhoo came neither from the circus, where the term originated, nor from the marts of trade, where it has been glibly refined and labelled high pressure salesmanship.

Tex Rickard, from whose recent death the sporting world has not yet recovered, was so preëminently king of the ballyhoo that there is not even a crown prince to succeed him. No man even faintly approximates his grasp of the art of space grabbing. It doesn't matter greatly that he chose professional sports as the medium for his peculiar genius. He would have succeeded as largely in any field.

He never consciously developed this talent. He did not use it until he was deep in his thirties. It lay dormant, waiting for some fortuitous circumstance, while he roamed Alaska and the gold camps of the West and South American trails.

Unknown to himself, he had the "head-line" instinct. He knew a good story when he saw it, and he could make a good story out of frail beginnings. Tex would have developed into an outstanding newspaper editor.

Had he taken to the involved trade of the publicity counsel he would have been the foremost of all press agents.

The impetus that started Tex Rickard on the career by which he became famous was the desire of Goldfield, Nevada, to get some national publicity. No one in the desert town knew what to do. Tex finally suggested a championship prize-fight; the idea was seized upon with avidity, and he was elected to the job of putting it over, because he was known from Alaska to the Panhandle as the squarest shooter in the West. The sour-dough boys and the prospectors and the roulette players all trusted the quiet, tight mouthed gambler, who could win or lose a hundred thousand dollars without a change of expression.

SO TEX left his house of chance in charge of "Kid" Kieley, his partner and inside man, while he bent his energies toward making Goldfield famous.

"Battling" Nelson and Joe Gans were the greatest men of their weight in the game. Though arguments and recriminations had been exchanged, nothing definite had been done toward