

Resolutions of the Collaboration Committee*

Richmond, Virginia

June 16, 1943

THIS IS A DAY OF GREAT DIFFERENCES, strong feelings, and epochal conflicts throughout the world. Yet the world's greatest need and hope is to find common ground for universal action and balanced harmony among all peoples. Manifestly, such a goal must be reached through cooperative approximation to the largest measure of agreement in line with the largest number of values and the largest number of people.

We face, therefore, the double crisis of standing firm for the conservation and preservation of human rights; yet to seek these ends by the way of peace and planning rather than by conflict and revolution.

In America, and particularly in the South, we face the problem of readjustments to meet the demands of present and post-war conditions with reference to the Negro and the future development of a great region of the Nation. This, exclusive of the war, is the great crisis of the South and Nation.

This is the problem of two great peoples caught up in the midst of transition between the powerful heritage of the past and the mighty pull of the future. For here is the white South, a *great* people often doing little things and good people doing *bad* things. And here is the Negro South, caught as always between the upper and nether millstones of conflicting forces and also paying the price of extraordinary transition from level to level of cultural achievement, and needing plenty of understanding and cooperation. And here is the white South inexorably conditioned by cultural complexes, suffering terribly, too, and needing sympathy and help as few peoples have ever needed in the annals of man. And, even more important, the two, white South and black South, are part and parcel of the Nation, whose people need scarcely less than the two regional peoples the sense of time and wisdom.

The war has sharpened the issue of Negro-white relations in the United States, and particularly in the South. A result has been increased racial tensions, fears, and aggressions, and an opening up of the basic questions of racial segregation and discrimination, Negro minority rights, and democratic freedom, as they apply practically in Negro-white relations in the South. These issues are acute and threaten to become even more serious as they increasingly block, through the deeper fears aroused, common sense consideration for even elementary improvements in Negro status and the welfare of the country as a whole.

This is a rare challenge to the leadership of the South: to the white leadership to find new ways of cooperation and to justify increased confidence of the Negro leadership in the white South; to the Negro leadership, to sense the difficulties involved and to meet increasing demands, without slowing down their essential efforts.

As evidence of the promise of this leadership, two recent Southern conferences on race relations, one at Durham, under the auspices of Negro leadership, and one in Atlanta, under the auspices of white leadership, have blazed new trails. As a follow-up of these and with the above problems and backgrounds in mind, we, a group of Southern whites and Negroes, representing both the Durham and Atlanta groups,

*Joint committee of representatives of the Durham and Atlanta Conferences.

meeting as a collaboration committee at Richmond, Virginia, June 16, 1943, and following the general trend of the Atlanta group, urge the general adoption of the Durham statement entitled "A Basis for Interracial Cooperation and Development in the South," which has had extraordinary nation-wide endorsement.

The framers of this covenant, realizing that the situation calls for both candor and wisdom, have included adequate and searching analysis of the principal issues involved, duly interpreted in their proper perspective. The problems so featured include political and civil rights, industry and labor, service occupations, education, agriculture, military service, social welfare and health.

In the area of political and civil rights: the essential problems featured were those of franchise and the ballot, jury service, personal security, services in public carriers, the elimination of violence within and without the law, the elimination of lynching, and the employment of an increasingly larger number of Negroes in the public service.

In the area of work opportunities: the increased training for all skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled labor, and opportunity for employment; the readaptation of labor union policies both for the best interests of Negroes and labor unions; the problems of dual standards of pay; support of, but guarding against discrimination in, local, state, and federal procedures; special problems of service workers and standards of living.

In the area of education: equalized opportunities in all aspects but especially including institutions of higher learning, professional training, and equal salaries.

In the area of agriculture: adequate opportunity for the Negro farmer, including a sound system of tenancy, adequate state and federal assistance, increased opportunity for farm ownership, fair farm wages, and the wider employment of Negro farm and home agents.

In the area of military service: along with the obligation to serve, the opportunity for full participation and advancement in the war activities and a continuing better adjustment of unsatisfactory situations.

In the area of social welfare and health: adequate provisions for safe-guarding the public health, for training physicians and nurses, and for their employment. Also, the erection of low-cost housing and other facilities for improving community life.

We recognize now the importance of affirmative action, without which we shall fall far short of our hopes and possibilities. To this end, we direct that the continuing committee, as appointed by the two groups now consolidated in this larger collaboration committee, be charged with the responsibility for working out methods and practical means of approach. We urge especially that efforts be begun to prepare the post-war world for a wise and successful reception of our returning soldiers and to prepare both our soldiers and the people for attitudes and procedures adequate to carry the great load of post-war needs. In all these, we urge the public to a new sense of the meaning of these needs as they accord with our professed principles of Christianity and democracy.

Signed: Charlotte Hawkins Brown
Virginius Dabney
A. W. Dent
William G. Gehri
Archdeacon B. W. Harris
S. S. Morris
Josephine Wilkins
Howard W. Odum, Chairman