

# HARDING SAYS NEGRO MUST HAVE EQUALITY IN POLITICAL LIFE

**Does Not Mean Same Social  
Plane, He Tells South in  
Birmingham Speech.**

**WARNS AGAINST 'DEMAGOGY'**

**Tells Audience He Will Speak  
Frankly, "Whether You  
Like It or Not."**

**PRAISED BY UNDERWOOD**

**Alabama City Gives Rousing Wel-  
come to Chief Executive, Who  
Receives College Degree.**

*Special to The New York Times.*

**BIRMINGHAM, Ala., Oct. 26.**—Following ovations accorded to him by crowds conservatively estimated to have numbered more than 100,000 persons, President Harding, speaking today before a great audience of whites and colored people in Capitol Park, declared that the negro is entitled to full economic and political rights as an American citizen. He added that this does not mean "social equality." The white man and the negro also should stand, he asserted, uncompromisingly against "every suggestion of social equality." Racial amalgamation, he added, can never come in America.

Perhaps not one person among ten in the thousand that jammed Capitol Park could hear the President, but those who were up in front and in a position to understand heard the Presidential message with the closest attention. Some approved of his utterances. Others, it appeared, did not, although there was not one word uttered from the audience that would substantiate the last observation. Parts of the speech appealed to the negroes in the audience and they gave vent to loud and lusty cheers to evidence their approval. On the other hand only once or twice was there any applause from the white section and in both instances it was scattered.

The race problem, the President declared, was no longer a sectional question applicable only to the Southern States, but a national question which must be met as such. In recent years, he pointed out, great numbers of negroes had left the South to seek homes in the North and West and as a result of this migration, he said, the "race question" had been brought closer to the people of the North and West and "I believe," he added, "it has served to modify somewhat the views of those sections on this question."

**Calls Social Equality a Dream.**

After warning the negroes that social equality was a dream that could not be realized, the President in words that held no doubt told them that in his opinion the time had come when they should vote not as Republicans but as they thought. He wanted, he said, to see the tradition of a solid black Republican vote broken and the time come when negroes would vote the Democratic ticket when they considered Democratic candidates and policies best for the country and when only for those same reasons would they vote for Republican candidates.

During the first part of the President's speech he paid his tribute to Birmingham, the "Magic City," as he styled it, of the South. He also warmed the hearts of the old Confederates and the sons and daughters of the "Lost Cause" veterans when he expressed the earnest hope that some day the history of the "Aladdin-like industrial wonder" of the civil war South will be written and the world will realize how the agricultural and aristocratic South of ante-bellum days met a great crisis and gave what he described as one of "the greatest demonstrations in all history of the possibilities of adaptation, organization and industrial development under stress of great necessity."

It was following his glowing tribute to the Confederate South that the President brought forward the race problem which, he told his audience, he was going to discuss frankly and honestly "whether you like it or not."

"If the civil war marked the beginnings of industrialism in a South which had previously been almost entirely agricultural, the World War," he said, "brought us to full recognition that the race question is national rather than sectional."

"While there are no authentic statistics, it is common knowledge that the World War was marked by a great negro migration from the Southern into the Northern States, where the negroes were attracted by the demand for labor and the higher wages offered in the North and West. The movement had been slowly under way for decades. But in the World War, because of conditions already described, it was greatly accelerated and has subsequently continued at only a slightly reduced rate."

Those in the crowd near the speakers' stand, white as well as black, were all attentive. The negroes were particularly attentive, and the smiles on their faces indicated that they anticipated that their status in the South was about to be championed by the President of the United States. When the President, a few minutes later, referred to the war record of the black soldier they cheered at the tops of their voices, and when, still later, the President said that the black man should be permitted to vote when he was fit to vote and the white man deprived of his vote when he was unfit for the suffrage, the black element in the audience again shouted their approval of the sentiment in unmistakable fashion. The whites were silent.

On the stand with the President were

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# HARDING SAYS NEGRO MUST HAVE EQUALITY

and particularly your problem. More and more it is becoming a problem of the North; more and more it is the problem of Africa, of South America, of the Pacific, of the South Seas, of the world. It is the problem of democracy everywhere, if we mean the things we say about democracy as the ideal political state.

the Civil War, a company of Alabama boys who fought with the Rainbow Division in France, National Guardsmen of the newly organized State militia, men and women and boys and girls from the industrial establishments of the city... last of all and most applauded of all, the "Pioneers of 1871," old men and women, white and black. In the leading "pioneer" car was the venerable John B. Ward, a former Mayor, and with him a gray haired old colored man, Frank McQueen, a barber, who has been shaving prominent Birmingham citizens and cutting their hair since the day that Birmingham was a flag station.

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Governor Thomas E. Kilby, Dr. N. A. Barrett, President of the Commission Government of Birmingham; E. W. Bowie, President of the Birmingham Semi-Centennial Celebration Association, and a majority of the members of the Alabama Legislature, who came on special trains from Montgomery to join in the welcome to the President and Mrs. Harding, Senator and Mrs. Underwood, Secretary of War Weeks, Secretary of the Interior Fall, and the sixty-seven girls who have been voted the "most beautiful" in the sixty-seven counties that comprise the Commonwealth of Alabama.

Dr. Barrett, in the name of Birmingham, welcomed the President, while Governor Kilby extended the welcome for the State. Birmingham welcomed the President, said Dr. Barrett, because he was a man of "great heart" and with vision big enough to take in as President "every mother's son of us," a statement that brought forth a vigorous nod of approval from President Harding.

The President was presented to the audience by Mr. Bowie. When the applause seemed to be gathering momentum and another ovation was threatened the President waved for silence. It was very hot and there was no shade over the speakers' stands.

The President said:

## The President's Speech.

"I entered the Senate when you commissioned Senator Underwood to that body, and somehow, I never knew just why, we began with a 'paired' agreement to protect each other's votes. That arrangement held until I retired from the Senate, and we rarely, if ever, had to ask each other for instructions. There was a confident, respectful and cordial friendship from the beginning, and it was never embarrassed. Perhaps I need not tell you that my high opinion and affectionate regard still abide. Not so very long ago it became my duty to choose four outstanding Americans to represent our Republic in a conference with the statesmen of the leading nations of the world. It was not a personal regard alone, but that feeling combined with a high estimate of his statesmanship and his lofty devotion to country impelled me to name him as one of four to speak for America in a conference pregnant with incalculable possibilities.

"Politically and economically there need be no occasion for great and permanent differentiation, provided on both sides there shall be recognition of the absolute divergence in things social and racial," said the President. "I would say let the black man vote when he is fit to vote; prohibit the white man voting when he is unfit to vote. I wish that both the tradition of a solidly Democratic South and the tradition of a solidly Republican black race might be broken up. I would insist upon equal educational opportunity for both.

"Men of both races may well stand uncompromisingly against every suggestion of social equality. This is not a question of social equality, but a question of recognizing a fundamental, eternal, inescapable difference.

"Racial amalgamation there cannot be. Partnership of the races in developing the highest aims of all humanity there must be if humanity is to achieve the ends which we have set for it. The black man should seek to be, and he should be encouraged to be, the best possible black man and not the best possible imitation of a white man.

"The World War brought us to full recognition that the race problem is national rather than merely sectional. There are no authentic statistics, but it is common knowledge that the World War was marked by a great migration of colored people to the North and West. They were attracted by the demand for labor and the higher wage offered. It has brought the question of race closer to North and West, and I believe, it has served to modify some what the views of those sections on this question. It has made the South realize its industrial dependence on the labor of the black man and made the North realize the difficulties of the community in which two greatly differing races are brought to live side by side. I should say that it has been responsible for a larger charity on both sides; a beginning of better understanding and in the light of that better understanding perhaps we shall be able to consider this problem together as a problem of all sections and of both races, in whose solution the best intelligence of both must be enlisted.

## Says Race Issue Confronts World.

"Indeed, we will be wise to recognize it as wider yet. Whoever will take the time to read and ponder Mr. Lothrop Stoddard's book on 'The Rising Tide of Color,' or, say, the thoughtful review of some recent literature on this question which Mr. F. D. Lugard presented in recent Edinburg Review, must realize that our race problem here in the United States is only a phase of a race issue that the whole world confronts. Sure, we shall gain nothing by blinking the facts, by refusing to give thought to them. That is not the American way of approaching such issues.

"Mr. Lugard, in his recent essay after surveying the world's problem of races, concludes thus:

"Here, then, is the true conception of the interrelation of color—complete uniformity in ideals, absolute equality in the paths of knowledge and culture, equal opportunity for those who strive equal admiration for those who achieve in matters social and racial; a separate path, each pursuing his own inherited traditions, preserving his own racial purity, and race pride; equality of things spiritual; agreed divergence of the physical and material.

"Here, it has seemed to me, is suggestion of the true way out. Political and economically there need be no occasion for great and permanent differentiation, for limitations of the individual's opportunity, provided that on both sides there shall be recognition of the absolute divergence in things social and racial. When I suggest the possibility of economic equality between the races I mean it in precisely the same way as I mean it in precisely the same way as if I spoke of equality of economic opportunity as between members of the same race. In each case I would mean equality proportioned to the honest capacities and deserts of the individual.

"Men of both races may well stand uncompromisingly against every suggestion of social equality. Indeed, it would be helpful to have that word 'equality' eliminated from this consideration; have it accented on both sides that it is not a question of social equality, but a question of recognizing a fundamental, eternal and inescapable difference. We shall have made real progress when we develop an attitude in the public community thought of both races which recognizes this difference.

"Take the political aspect. I would say let the black man vote when he is fit to vote; prohibit the white man voting when he is unfit to vote. Expecta would I appeal to the self-respect of the colored race. I would inculcate in the wish to improve itself as a distinct race, with a heredity, a set of traditions, an array of aspirations all its own. Of such racial ambitions and pride come racial segregations, with narrowing and rights, such as are proceeding in both rural and urban communities now in Southern States, satisfying natural inclinations and adding notably to happiness and contentment.

On the other hand I would insist upon equal educational opportunity for both. This does not mean that both would become equally educated within generation or two generations or generations. Even men of the same race do not accomplish such an equality that. There must be such education and the colored people as will enable them to develop their own leaders, capable understanding and sympathizing with such a differentiation between the races as I have suggested—leaders who inspire the race with proper ideals, race pride, of national pride, of honorable destiny, and important participation in the universal effort of advancement of humanity as a whole. Racial amalgamation there cannot be. Partnership of the races in developing the highest aims of all humanity there must be if humanity, not only here everywhere, is to achieve the ends which we have set for it.

## Be the Best Possible Black Man.

"I can say to you people of the South both white and black, that the time has passed when you are entitled to assume that this problem of races is peculiar

"The one thing we must sedulously avoid is the development of group and class organizations in this country. There has been time when we heard too much about the labor vote, the business vote, the Irish vote, the Scandinavian vote, the Italian vote, and so on. But the demagogues who would array class against class and group against group have fortunately found little to reward their efforts. That is because, despite the demagogues, the idea of our oneness as Americans has risen superior to every appeal to mere class and group. And so I would wish it might be in this matter of our national problem of races: I would accept that a black man cannot be a white man, and that he does not need and should not aspire to be as much like a white man as possible in order to accomplish the best that is possible for him. He should seek to be, and he should be encouraged to be, the best possible black man, and not the best possible imitation of a white man.

"It is a matter of the keenest national concern that the South shall not be encouraged to make its colored population a vast reservoir of ignorance, to be drained away by the processes of migration into all other sections. That is what has been going on in recent years at a rate so accentuated that it has caused this question of races to be, as I have already said, no longer one of a particular section. Just as I do not wish the South to be politically entirely one party; just as I believe that is bad for the South, and for the rest of the country as well, so I do not want the colored people to be entirely of one party. I wish that both the tradition of a solidly Democratic South and the tradition of a solidly Republican black race might be broken up. Neither political sectionalism nor any system of rigid groupings of the people will in the long run prosper our country.

"With such convictions one must urge the people of the South to take advantage of their superior understanding of this problem and to assume an attitude toward it that will deserve the confidence of the colored people. Likewise, I plead with my own political party to lay aside every program that looks to lining up the black man as a mere political adjunct. Let there be an end of prejudice and of demagoguery in this line. Let the South understand the menace which lies in forcing upon the black race an attitude of political solidarity.

"Every consideration, it seems to me, brings us back at last to the question of education. When I speak of education as a part of this race question, I do not want the States or the nation to attempt to educate people, whether white or black, into something they are not fitted to be. I have no sympathy with the half-baked altruism that would overstock us with doctors and lawyers of whatever color, and leave us in need of people fit and willing to do the manual work of a workaday world. But I would like to see an education that would fit every man not only to do his particular work as well as possible but to rise to a higher plane if he would deserve it. For that sort of education I have no fears, whether it be given to a black man or a white man. From that sort of education, I believe, black men, white men, the whole nation, would draw immeasurable benefit.

## Sees Competition for Black Man.

"It is probable that as a nation we have come to the end of the period of very rapid increase in our population. Restricted immigration will reduce the rate of increase, and force us back upon our older population to find people to do the simpler, physically harder manual tasks. This will require some difficult readjustments.

"In anticipation of such a condition the South may well recognize that the North and West are likely to continue their drafts upon its colored population and that if the South wishes to keep its fields producing and its industry still expanding it will have to compete for the services of the colored man. If I will realize its need for him and deal quite fairly with him, the South will be able to keep him in such numbers as your activities make desirable.

"Is it not possible, then, that in this long era of readjustment upon which we are entering, for the nation to lay aside old prejudices and old antagonisms, and in the broad, clear light of nationalism enter upon a constructive policy in dealing with these intricate issues? Just as we shall prove ourselves capable of doing this we shall insure the industrial progress, the agricultural security, the social and political safety of our whole country, regardless of race or sections, and along the line of ideals superior to every consideration of groups or class, of race or color or section or prejudices."

When the speech was ended, Governor Kilby was one of the first to shake the President's hand. He was followed by scores of other prominent citizens. Any in the great throng resented what the President had said none indicated it by their remarks. As a matter of fact, THE TIMES correspondent has met a Birmingham citizen who has expressed disapproval of the President's views.

There are many who do not agree with him as to political equality, but what I said about the impossibility of "social equality" more than offset anything I said on other lines. The warmth and enthusiasm of the demonstration that followed his every appearance during the afternoon and night proved this.

## All Birmingham Greets Harding.

Birmingham gave to President Harding the greatest reception, according to old-time citizens, ever accorded any man in the history of this fifty-year-old steel and iron centre of the South. From the moment his special train rolled into the terminal station at 8:45 o'clock this morning until he returned to that train late tonight, the President was the recipient of one great ovation after another. The authorities estimate that more than 100,000 persons joined in the series of vociferous tributes that were paid to the President on his public appearances.

The President himself said no warmer welcome had been given him in any part of America, while Secretary Weeks and Secretary Fall called it the greatest and most enthusiastic reception the President had received since he entered the White House. Birmingham has 180,000 people within its limits, and apparently all the residents were out to greet the President.

Every moment of the President's day was provided for, and before he left for Atlanta tonight he had made seven speeches, beginning with one to the sixty-seven girls who had been voted the best looking in Alabama, and ending with a short farewell talk at the Country Club tonight. At all of these gatherings the President expressed his own and Mrs. Harding's deep appreciation of all the kindnesses shown to them by the people of Birmingham. He told the members of the Legislature, who came in a body and by special train to greet him, that his love for Alabama and Florida and Mississippi was every bit as deep and sincere as was the affection he had for his own State of Ohio and for New York and Illinois.

The city was garbed in its gayest to welcome the President. Every street was a mass of color and at every corner and in the centre of every block there was displayed the President's picture. It was the big day of the week's celebration of the semi-centennial of a city that only fifty years ago was a country post office and whose inhabitants then were numbered by the score instead of in the thousands as now, a town that in a brief span of half a century has grown from a hamlet of a few log cabins to a city of skyscrapers, beautiful homes, iron and steel smelters and factories.

When the President emerged from the railway station he faced a sea of American flags in the hands of Birmingham's thousands of school children, and as his automobile slowly proceeded to the spot where he was to receive the official welcome of the city and State the wheels of his automobile traversed streets strewn with flowers, while from sidewalks and from windows thousands cheered.

## Flowers Thrown Into Harding's Car.

After a brief rest at his hotel, the President headed a parade through the principal streets of the city, a parade that was witnessed and cheered, so say the old timers, by the greatest throng that ever gathered in this part of the South. The people threw flowers into the President's car as it passed by and Mr. Harding, tiring of raising his hat, stood up and waved without stopping.

After leading the parade through the city the President proceeded to the balcony of the Hotel Tutwiler to review the marchers. In line were veterans of