

ment and the compiler was J. Edgar Hoover, later to become head of the F.B.I.

The report read in part: "At this time there can no longer be any question of a well concerted movement among a certain class of negro leaders of thought and action to constitute themselves a determined and persistent source of radical opposition to the government and to the established rule of law and order.

"Among the more salient points to be noted in the present attitude of the negro leaders are, first, the ill governed measures in connection with lynching; third, the more openly expressed demand for social equality, in which the sex problem is not infrequently included..."

As consequence of the wide spread riots that developed, a former employee of the **Chicago Defender**, Claude A. Barnett, established the Associated Negro Press, the first national Black news service, which he operated from 1919 to 1964.

The attacks on the Black press were carried to the floor of Congress as well and there Congressman James F. Byrnes - later to be Governor of South Carolina, Secretary of State and a member of the Supreme Court - placed the blame for "The Red Summer" squarely on the shoulders of the Black press which he accused of inflaming its readers. The **New York Times** of August 26, 1919, reported:

"Representative James F. Byrnes of South Carolina told the House today that the race antagonism which flared up in Washington and other sections of the country recently had its inspiration in incendiary utterances of negro leaders as disseminated through negro publications."

Byrnes suggested that the publishers be prosecuted under the Espionage Act and if there was no law prohibiting the sending of their publications through the mail, one should be enacted. Nothing came of the Congressman's suggestion, but over the next few months the government kept up a steady attack against the Black press, seeking to discredit it. Stories alleging a Black conspiracy to incite appeared regularly in the nation's leading

newspapers. Example:

"Evidence is accumulating in the files of the government to show that the negroes of this country are the object of a vicious and apparently well financed program, which is directed against white people, and which seeks by newspapers, pamphlets and in other ways to stir up discontent among the negroes, particularly the uneducated class in the southern states...A federal official exhibited to the **Times** a few days ago a recent copy of a negro magazine which is said to have a large circulation in sections where there are considerable negro publications." **New York Times**, July 28, 1919.

"Russian Soviet interests apparently are supplying funds for propaganda to stir up race antagonism in the U.S., according to information now in the hands of the Department of Justice." **New York Times**, August 27, 1919.

No such evidence was ever made public and there is a serious question whether such evidence ever existed, or whether the charges were manufactured out of an intent to so stain the Black press with the smear of subversion that it would be reduced to impotency or frightened into silence. If that as the strategy, it did not work. The steady drumfire of protest did not stop and the papers gained even more credibility by the sheer viciousness of the government's attacks. It was, however, a sad and trying period for the First Amendment.

Efforts were also being made outside of Washington to muzzle the Black press, but these were more direct. It was not uncommon for Black publications to be confiscated by southern officials, or for distributors to be beaten and ordered out of town. The **Crisis** received many letters attesting to this, including this one from a correspondent in Florida:

"I would be glad to continue to serve you as agent and willing but you are aware of the fact that the crackers or Ku Klux will beat a colored man for giving the **Crisis** away in some sections of this country. I wish to stop here a little longer as I make good wages in railroad service...As long as I can stay in peace I

decided I would discontinue for reasons stated above..."

The **Crusader** received this letter from "somewhere in the South. Names are deleted for safety of the writer."

"We here in the South are not allowed to sell Northern newspapers. We have to slip the paper into the hands of our friends and I am trying to induce my friends to subscribe by the year for the **Crusader**. Every public school teacher is watched, also the Negro preacher."

Given the attitude of the South toward the newspapers coming down from the North, and the fact that Blacks were still under the domination of whites in the South, it would have been expecting too much to have the papers published in the South assume the same militant stance as their sister papers in the North. And in fact, they did not. It was a matter of survival.

"Freedom of the (southern Black) press was minimal," Theodore G. Vincent has observed in "Voices of a Black Nation - Political Journalism in the Harlem Renaissance", going on to note that it was dangerous for these southern papers to endorse anything considered controversial, including the NAACP and trade unionism.

It was in the North, in the large cities, that the militant press flourished but since they were widely distributed throughout the South - despite efforts to keep them out - their influence did not stop at the city's edge.

One of the leading weeklies of the period was Marcus Garvey's **New World**, the organ of his worldwide Black nationalist organization, the Universal Negro Improvement Association. The strong voice of A. Philip Randolph thundered from the pages of the magazine the **Messenger**. W.E.B. DuBois made the NAACP's **Crisis** magazine into one of the most influential magazines of the times. And at the National Urban League, Dr. Charles S. Johnson began **Opportunity** magazine which was to publish an astounding variety of articles, stories and poetry by some of the nation's most outstanding figures. There were other Black magazines published during this era, but only **Crisis** survives today.



JOSEPH C. JEREMIE

1854 - 1952

- ONE OF HAITI'S MOST DISTINGUISHED CITIZENS WHO LIVED TO BE 99-YEARS YOUNG IN 1882 HE FOUNDED THE FIRST NEWS-PAPER EVER PRINTED IN HAITI. HE BEGAN HIS DIPLO-MATIC CAREER AS AN EMBASSY CLERK SERVED AS MINISTER OF STATE AND OF WAR AND AS A SUPREME COURT JUSTICE.
- HIS COLORFUL LIFE HAD ITS UPS AND DOWNS. HE WAS EXILED TWICE FROM HAITI FOR HIS POLITICAL ACTIVITIES. ONCE DECORATED BY POPE PIUS XII AND WAS ONE OF THE SIGNERS OF THE CUBAN ACT OF INDEPENDENCE. ON HIS 97th BIRTHDAY HE WAS PRESENTED WITH HAITI'S HIGHEST HONOR - THE ORDRE D'HONNEUR ET MERITE - BY PRES. PAUL MAGLOIRE. PERHAPS HIS
- GREATEST HERITAGE WAS BEING THE GREAT GRANDSON OF THE FAMOUS JEAN BAPTISTE POINT DUSAUBLE, EXPLORER WHO FOUNDED CHICAGO IN 1779. JEREMIE AN AUTHOR OF 10 BOOKS WROTE "HAITI AND CHICAGO" PUBLISHED IN FRENCH IN 1950. A RELIGIOUS MAN HE WOULD CLIMB 102-STEPS TO HIS CHURCH AT 98!

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