

## "THE NIAGARA MOVEMENT."

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The platform adopted by the conference is as follows:

1. Freedom of speech and criticism.
2. An unfettered and unsubsidized press.
3. Full manhood suffrage.
4. The abolition of all caste distinctions based simply on race or color.
5. The recognition of the principle of human brotherhood as a practical, present creed.
6. The recognition of the highest and best human training as the monopoly of no class or race.
7. A belief in the dignity of labor.
8. United effort to realize these ideals under a wise, pure and fearless leadership.

The address issued to the American people is as follows:

The members of the conference known as the Niagara Movement, assembled in annual meeting at Buffalo, July 11th, 12th and 13th, 1905, congratulate the Negro-Americans on certain undoubted evidences of progress in the last decade, particularly the increase of intelligence, the buying of property, the checking of crime, the uplift in home life, the advance in literature and art, and the demonstration of constructive and executive ability in the conduct of great religious, economic and educational institutions. At the same time, we believe that this class of American citizens should protest emphatically and continually against the curtailment of their political rights. We believe in manhood suffrage; we believe that no man is so good, intelligent or wealthy as to be entrusted wholly with the welfare of his neighbor. We believe also in protest against the curtailment of our civil rights. All American citizens have the right to equal treatment according to their behavior and deserts. We especially complain against the denial of equal opportunities to us in economic life. In the rural districts of the South this amounts to peonage and virtual slavery; all over the South it tends to crush labor and small business enterprises; and everywhere American prejudice, helped often by iniquitous laws, is making it more difficult for Negro-Americans to earn a decent living. Common school education should be free to all American children, and compulsory. High school training should be adequately provided for all, and college training should be the monopoly of no class or race in any section of our common country. We believe that in defense of its own institutions, the United States should aid common school education, particularly in the South, and we especially recommend concerted agitation to this end. We urge an increase in public high school facilities in the South, where the Negro-Americans are almost wholly without such provisions. We favor well-equipped trade and technical schools for the training of artisans; and the need of adequate and liberal endowment for a few institutions of higher education must be patent to sincere well-wishers of the race. We demand upright judges in courts, juries selected without discrimination on account of color, and the same measure of punishment and the same efforts at reformation for black as for white offenders. We need orphanages and farm schools for dependent children, juvenile reformatories for delinquents, and the abolition of the dehumanizing convict-lease system. We note with alarm the evident retrogression in this land of sound public opinion on the subject of manhood rights, republican government and human brotherhood, and we pray God that his nation shall not degenerate into a mob of boasters and oppressors, but rather may return to the faith of the fathers—that all men were created free and equal, with certain unalienable rights. We plead for health—for an opportunity to live in decent houses and localities, for a chance to rear our children in physical and moral cleanliness. We hold up for public execration the conduct of two opposite classes of men; the practice among employers of importing ignorant Negro-American laborers in emergencies, and then affording them neither protection nor permanent employment; and the practice of labor unions of proscribing and boycotting and oppressing thousands of their fellow-toilers, simply because they are black. These methods have accentuated and will accentuate the war of labor and capital, and they are disgraceful to both sides. We refuse to allow the impression to remain that the Negro-American assents to inferiority, is submissive under oppression and apologetic before insults. Through helplessness we may submit, but the voice of protest of ten million Americans must never cease to assail the ears of their fellows, so long as America is unjust. Any discrimination based simply on race or color is barbarous, we care not how hallowed it be by custom, expediency or prejudice. Differences made on account of ignorance, immorality, poverty or disease may be legitimate methods of fighting evil, and against them we have no word of protest; but discriminations based simply and solely on physical peculiari-

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The national conference of American negroes held recently at Buffalo, N. Y., has been but inadequately noticed in the newspapers. The leading spirit was Professor Du Bois, of Atlanta University, at whose call the conference was gathered. Fourteen States were represented by 29 leading negroes. A permanent organization, under the name of "The Niagara Movement," was formed, with Professor Du Bois as secretary and George H. Jacobson, of Cincinnati, as treasurer. The *Chicago Public* says: "The animus of this movement is evidently opposition to Booker T. Washington's theory of industrial education for negroes as negroes, and without reference to their rights as men."

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ties, place of birth, color of skin, are relics of that unreasoning human savagery of which the world is and ought to be thoroughly ashamed. We protest against the Jim-Crow car, since its effect is and must be to make us pay first-class fare for third-class accommodations, render us open to insults and discomfort, and to crucify wantonly our manhood, womanhood and self-respect. We regret that this nation has never seen fit adequately to reward the black soldiers who in its five wars have defended their country with their blood, and yet have been systematically denied the promotions which their abilities deserve. And we regard as unjust, the exclusion of black boys from the military and naval training schools. We urge upon Congress the enactment of appropriate legislation for securing the proper enforcement of those articles of freedom, the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth amendments to the Constitution of the United States. We repudiate the monstrous doctrine that the oppressor should be the sole authority as to the rights of the oppressed. The Negro race in America, stolen, ravished and degraded, struggling up through difficulties and oppression, needs sympathy and receives criticism, needs help and is given hindrance, needs protection and is given mob-violence, needs justice and is given charity, needs leadership and is given cowardice and apology, needs bread and is given a stone. This nation will never stand justified before God until these things are changed. Especially are we surprised and astonished at the recent attitude of the church of Christ—on the increase of a desire to bow to racial prejudice, to narrow the bounds of human brotherhood and to segregate black men in some outer sanctuary. This is wrong, unchristian and disgraceful to twentieth century civilization. Of the above grievances we do not hesitate to complain, and to complain loudly and insistently. To ignore, overlook, or apologize for these wrongs is to prove ourselves unworthy of freedom. Persistent manly agitation is the way to liberty, and toward this goal the Niagara Movement has started and asks the co-operation of all men of all races. At the same time we want to acknowledge with deep thankfulness the help of our fellow-men, from the abolitionist down to those who to-day still stand for equal opportunity and who have given and still give of their wealth and of their poverty for our advancement. And while we are demanding, and ought to demand, and will continue to demand the rights enumerated above, God forbid that we should ever forget to urge corresponding duties upon our people: The duty to vote; the duty to respect the rights of others; the duty to work; the duty to obey the laws; the duty to be clean and orderly; the duty to send our children to school; the duty to respect ourselves, even as we respect others. This statement, complaint and prayer we submit to the American people, and to Almighty God.

The attitude of those who are inclined to fall in with a trend of public opinion that has been threatening to swamp certain of our American ideals is reflected in the *Outlook*, which says editorially:

These men who have undertaken to organize the "Niagara Movement" . . . are likely to injure rather than to benefit their race so far as they have any influence upon the race at all. They are likely to do this, in the first place, because, although they advocate some things most necessary for the progress of the negro race and the health of the nation, they base their protest largely on a misapprehension of the facts. That the welfare of the negro depends on unqualified "manhood suffrage" seems to be their assumption. . . . Unqualified "manhood suffrage" is not a principle, it is a device to secure justice—a device which has sometimes worked well and sometimes ill. . . . Democratic sentiment in America, moreover, is not retreating before the caste spirit, as these men assert; it is rather growing in power and effectiveness. Race distinctions are not in every case unjust. Whatever distinctions are necessary for race integrity may properly be maintained. For colored men to argue that race separation is degrading to them is equivalent to a concession that their race is inferior—a concession which they themselves repudiate. . . . As a matter of fact, these colored men, mostly of the North, represent a small element in the race. The real leaders of the American negroes are not complaining; they are too busy inculcating habits of thrift, energy and self-control among the people to whom they are proud to belong.

Would it not seem a strange reason for belittling the earnest concern of these men, who are of univer-

sally recognized ability and devotion to the interests of their race, that they are few and are in advance of the large part of their fellow-sufferers? Thrift and energy and self-control are all very excellent things. They are excellent in free men, and they are especially excellent in slaves and in those who we are willing shall continue inferiors. Shall we imply that men like Professor Du Bois are not real leaders of their race because they have faith in more than habits of thrift and energy and self-control? We must not for a moment tolerate those top-heavy characters that have not the homely foundations of thrift, energy and self-control, but as long as we are satisfied with no more than this for a race or a class in our midst, but not satisfied with it for ourselves, we are untrue to the spirit of American freedom, we are untrue to the Divine Life of all men.

R. BARCLAY SPICER.