

PREFACE

This book is neither a good will tract on race relations nor an attempt to offer a program for the solution of a vexing problem. It is an effort to set forth descriptively and analytically the results of a study of the American labor movement in one of its most important aspects, namely, the relation of the dominant section of the working class to the segregated, circumscribed, and restricted Negro minority. Since the Civil War this black minority, by the very fact of the discrimination practiced against it, has been in a position to do great damage to the majority which proscribed it. The recent northward migrations, which brought hundreds of thousands of Negro workers into the industrial centers, dramatically forced the realization of this fact upon the white wage earners. The discrimination which the Negro suffers in industry is a heritage of his previous condition of servitude, kept alive and aggravated within the ranks of organized labor by the structure and politics of American trade unionism. This persistence of the Negro's slave heritage and the exclusive craft structure of the leading labor organizations are, in our opinion, two of four basic factors in the Negro's relation to his white fellow workers. The two others are (*a*) the change in the Negro's fundamental relation to industry resulting from the recent migrations and the absorption into the mills and factories of a substantial part of the reserve of black labor, and (*b*) the rise of a Negro middle class and the consequent spread of middle-class ideals throughout the Negro community.

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spirit in which it encouraged us to carry on our work without accounting, without supervision, without unsought advice or interference. The members of our advisory committee, Professor Henry R. Seager, Professor Robert E. Chaddock, and Professor Paul F. Brissenden, as well as Professor James C. Bonbright, Secretary of the Council for Research in the Social Sciences, were always ready to help us when we called upon them, and we thank them for their coöperation and assistance. To the late Professor Seager, in particular, we owe a debt of gratitude for wise counsel and generous aid for which no formal acknowledgment is adequate. We are also indebted to Mr. David J. Saposs, Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois, Mr. Elmer A. Carter, Mr. Louis M. Hacker, Miss Irma Rittenhouse, and Mrs. Edna Brand Mann for their valuable criticisms and suggestions, and to Miss Gertrude C. Smith for her expert assistance. The most important element in the conduct of this study has been the active coöperation of those with whom we came in contact in the field: employers, labor leaders, and white and Negro workers of the rank and file.

The substance out of which this book was made has come not merely out of other books and published sources. A large part of it was drawn from first hand investigation and observation in the field. This work is in every essential respect the joint product of both of us, although Sterling Spero was primarily responsible for the writing of Chapters I, VI, VII, VIII, IX, XI, XII, XIII, XVI, and XX, and Abram Harris for II, III, IV, V, X, XIV, XV, XVII, XVIII and XIX. We each read, criticized, and suggested changes in the other's work. For every statement and every conclusion — in fact, for everything in this book, we take joint responsibility.

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