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EDUCATION

1928  
THE POSSIBILITY OF DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA

H. E. Burghardt Du Bois.

In the presidential campaign just beginning one question transcends all others. It is, as the editors of a great organ of public opinion declare, "enormous" and of "vast importance". But these editors dare not take it up "at present". This question which transcends, in its importance and immediacy, the questions of farm relief, flood control, national control of super-power, liquor and the tariff, is the question as to how far the policies of this government are going to be controlled by the vote of its citizens.

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In other words, we cannot take up the various pressing questions confronting us until we settle this matter of ultimate democratic control. Despite tradition and assumption, this question is not settled. The proportion of actual voters among the voting population of the United States is between twenty-five and thirty-three per cent out of sixty million citizens twenty-one years of age and over.

The loss of interest in voting or the prevention by various means and methods of allowing citizens to exercise the right to vote, is a national phenomenon. Nowhere in the United States is there a voting population of seventy per cent of <sup>those qualified</sup> ~~the adult~~ population as in Eastern Canada, or seventy to eighty per cent as in France, Belgium, Holland, Germany and Switzerland. We do not even reach the sixty-four per cent of Italy and South America and, of course, the eighty or ninety per cent of Australia is apparently beyond our dreams.

Or, to put it another way: in 1920 we had both a presidential election and a decennial census; so that for the first time in twenty years we knew the population at the time of an election. In that

election, the following percentage of citizens twenty-one years of age and over did not vote in the several states:

Per Cent	Per Cent		
South Carolina.....	92	Wyoming.....	46
Mississippi.....	91	Nebraska.....	46
Georgia.....	89	Michigan.....	45
Louisiana.....	86	South Dakota.....	44
Texas.....	82	New York.....	44
Virginia.....	81	Colorado.....	44
Arkansas.....	79	Kansas.....	43
Alabama.....	79	Connecticut.....	43
Florida.....	72	Rhode Island.....	42
Tennessee.....	65	New Jersey.....	41
Pennsylvania.....	58	West Virginia.....	39
North Carolina.....	56	Idaho.....	39
Vermont.....	55	Montana.....	39
Maine.....	53	New Mexico.....	38
Arizona.....	53	Nevada.....	38
California.....	52	Ohio.....	38
Oklahoma.....	52	Iowa.....	35
Illinois.....	50	New Hampshire.....	33
Minnesota.....	49	Missouri.....	33
Maryland.....	48	Utah.....	30
Washington.....	48	North Dakota.....	30
Wisconsin.....	48	Kentucky.....	29
Oregon.....	48	Indiana.....	26
Massachusetts.....	47	Delaware.....	25

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The largest percentage of voluntary and involuntary disfranchisement is in the South; but it is not confined to the South. Over one-half the <sup>adults</sup> voters of Pennsylvania, Vermont, Maine and California staid from the poles and nearly one-half the voting population of Illinois, Minnesota, Washington, Wisconsin, Oregon, Massachusetts, Wyoming, Nebraska and Michigan. In only one state in the United States did three-fourths of the voters go to the poles and in only eight states did two-thirds go.

This is a serious thing. The theory of democracy does not call for equality of gift, universal college education or absolute individual integrity; but it does depend upon the widest possible consultation with the mass, <sup>of citizens</sup> on the theory that only in this way can you consult ultimate authority and ultimate sovereignty. This theory may be wrong. Possibly the United States is ready to adopt a restricted ballot and base sovereignty upon an electorate limited by education, occupation, ability,



*Possibly we are ready for Italian representation  
aligning or changing distribution*

birth, wealth, race, or some combination of these factors. But if this is true we must face the change frankly and adopt it logically. We must not drift further as we are doing. For a generation the possibility of any rational consultation of the public will in this country has been fading.

Today, the difference in the relative political power of the various states and groups of states is so enormous in the United States that no American has any right to sneer at Old Sarum or at the conditions that brought the first English Reform Bill. This can be illustrated by a table which shows the number of votes cast in the various states for the election of each of that state's representatives in Congress:

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1920

South Carolina	9,449	Idaho	57,471
Mississippi	10,312	North Dakota	38,592
Georgia	12,394	Maryland	71,211
Louisiana	15,733	Kansas	71,278
Texas	22,973	Connecticut	72,802
Virginia	25,100	Utah	72,914
Alabama	24,107	Colorado	73,013
Arkansas	25,801	Minnesota	73,584
Nevada	27,194	New Jersey	75,333
Florida	35,703	Oregon	75,174
Tennessee	42,853	Illinois	77,425
Vermont	44,955	Washington	78,720
Maine	49,385	New Hampshire	70,372
Pennsylvania	51,380	Michigan	70,405
North Carolina	53,874	Iowa	81,281
Rhode Island	55,795	Missouri	83,155
Wyoming	55,199	Kentucky	83,519
South Dakota	30,373	West Virginia	84,990
Oklahoma	30,572	California	85,759
Massachusetts	62,507	Montana	89,502
Wisconsin	65,753	Ohio	91,795
Nebraska	65,775	Delaware	94,753
Arizona	66,687	Indiana	97,108
New York	67,338	New Mexico	105,131

The stranger from Mars looking at this table would immediately ask:

"Why is it that the citizens from South Carolina should have eleven times as much political power as the citizens of New Mexico?" Or: "How can a voter in Massachusetts have fifty per cent more power than the voter in Indiana?"

If we group the states geographically,

we find that in 1920 the Pacific and Northwestern States cast 1,945,504 votes for 24 representatives in Congress, or 81,067 votes per congressman. The Middle West States cast 10,088,606 votes for 127 representatives, or 79,459 votes per representative. The Border States cast 4,194,509 votes for 58 representatives, or 72,319 votes per representative. The Southwest States cast 535,393 votes for 9 representatives, or 70,755 votes per representative. The Middle Atlantic States cast 5,649,213 votes for 91 representatives or 61,079 votes per representative. The New England States cast 4,967,711 votes for 52 representatives, or 61,492 votes per representative. Contrast this with the South, which cast only 2,175,007 votes and yet with them elected 94 representatives, or only 23,138 votes per representative.

New England has an enormous advantage over the Northwest and considerable over the Middle West, while the political advantage of the South is so extraordinary as to force consideration of its peculiar situation.

When one gets thus far in the argument, there arises in the mind of the average American reader the fact that the whole argument involves, at least in large part, the South; and brings back the almost forgotten question of Negro suffrage. This is true; but the object of this report is to impress the fact that the question at issue is much larger than this and that no matter what the discussion involves, it must be discussed, or else democratic government in the United States is impossible.

Senator Swanson of Virginia has just said in the Senate:

"The South has exercised her constitutional rights to eliminate a class of ignorant, shiftless and corrupt voters." Other states like Massachusetts have disfranchised the illiterate and, of course, the un-naturalized foreigners.

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36-2-5

There is no doubt that any modern democratic community faced by a large amount of ignorance, unusual poverty and political corruption must in some way defend itself. In the defense which the South attempted to make against ignorance, poverty and corruption, she had the moral support of the majority of citizens of the United States. But it is over a half century since the 15th Amendment was proclaimed and a full generation since the new Southern disfranchisement ~~laws were~~ *was begun*. ~~passed~~. At that time to disfranchise the poor and ignorant automatically excluded the great mass of the black men from the ballot. Today, a large number are still poor and illiterate. But today it is also true that large numbers of black men are disfranchised not because of ignorance or thriftlessness but simply and frankly because they are black. A critical time of consideration is approaching. Any day a case like the Texas primary may appear in the Supreme Court which will gravely challenge present methods and it is doubtful if any mere appeal to mob law against any such decision will be tolerated even in the South. Surely *then* the time has come for a careful, dispassionate consideration—not so much of the political condition of the South as of the effect which the political legislation of the South from 1890 to 190<sup>9</sup>~~8~~ has had upon the politics of the nation.

First and foremost, it is necessary for the nation to ask the South *States* what it is they wish today to disfranchise—race or condition? Do they *then* propose to exclude the ignorant, the poor and the criminal. If the first is what they propose, that is illegal and can only be ~~legally~~ done by constitutional amendment. There may be reasons which appeal to most Americans why disfranchisement by race is desirable. If so, such a campaign should be <sup>N</sup>inaugurated.

There has been a demand for this from a few persons North and South. But the reason that such a campaign has not been <sup>Seriously suggested</sup> ~~inaugurated~~, is,

of course, clear: the nation would logically demand first and foremost that if Negroes as such, are legally excluded from the right of suffrage, they ~~must~~ <sup>should</sup> not be counted as a basis of representation either in Congress or the state legislatures. In the founding of the American republic, New England demanded that representation in Congress be based on the ~~white~~ <sup>free</sup> population. Its stand was logically impregnable, and the only real, albeit unspoken argument that led to compromise, was the feeling that eventually the slave population was going to disappear, either by emancipation into freedmen or by deportation. Until this time, slaves were to count two-fifths of the white population in determining representation.

IP  
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With the 13th amendment, Negroes, although still <sup>economically</sup> partially enslaved, counted as five-fifths. With the new disfranchising laws, they still counted ~~as~~ <sup>fully as</sup> just as the white population. But this again was <sup>permitted</sup> on the tacit assumption that these laws were temporary in their application—that when the freedmen learned to read and write, accumulated property and established a modern, cultural life, they would be allowed to vote on the same terms as other Americans. Not only was this a former assumption of the North, -- it was the plain statement and repeated promise of the South.

It is, then, but reasonable that if the South wishes now to change the constitution and laws of the United States and make it possible to exclude men from voting on account of race and color—that the test of its sincerity is its willingness in that case not to count the colored population as a basis for representation.

If on the other hand the South merely wishes to get rid of an electorate too ignorant, too poverty stricken and corrupt to vote honestly, it has already a multiplicity of laws on the subject. But laws of this sort ought so to be drawn and administered as to encourage education and thrift and honesty, <sup>(and their proper test is the gradual disenfranchisement of illiterate and the gradual enfranchisement of Negroes)</sup> otherwise, they are ineffective and dangerous. <sup>just</sup>  
 whom does what has the South disfranchised?

IP As a matter of fact,

It is difficult to get an official record of voting in the United States and especially difficult in the South with regard to the voting of Negroes.

In Louisiana the state furnishes a fairly accurate, <sup>official</sup> record. In the election for President in 1924, there were 374,592 white persons registered and 930 Negroes. The white population of the state in 1920 was 1,093,311; the Negro population was 700,257. Of these, 564,933 whites were 21 years of age and over, and 389,351 Negroes. Of the adult Negroes 329,280 were reported as illiterate. This leaves 129,271 who can read and write. The statistics of illiteracy are ~~however grossly~~ inaccurate. Still, it would seem reasonable to suppose that at least 100,000 Louisiana Negroes were men of average intelligence, able to read and write. Nearly eighty percent of the Negro population, 10 years of age and over, is engaged in gainful occupations, and includes 154,109 farmers, 52,687 in manufacturing and mechanical industries, 21,802 working in transportation, 5,700 engaged in trade, 1,983 in the public service, 3,385 in professional service, 1,408 clerks and 54,370 servants. Moreover, among the Negroes there were more than 10,000 persons who owned their farms, and in addition to these farmers, 28,903 Negroes owned their homes. The total property owned by Negroes of Louisiana is unknown, but it amounts to a good sum.

Yet out of all these people, only 980 were allowed to register and vote. And the number of Negro registered voters has decreased almost by half in the last 15 years, as there were 1,743 registered in 1908. Manifestly Louisiana is disfranchising mainly by race and, <sup>not simply</sup> for illiteracy or shiftlessness.

In Alabama, there were reported 269,847 Negroes 21 years of age and over who could read and write in 1920. Careful inquiry shows that "there are not more than 3,500 Negroes voting in the state of Alabama and less than 1,000 in the city of Birmingham".



In Macon County, for instance, where Fiske College Institute is situated, there are 4,927 Negroes 21 years of age and over who can read and write, and of these 23 are registered voters.

In Montgomery County, containing the capital of the State, out of 13,973 literate Negroes 21 years of age and over, 41 are registered.

In Mobile County, out of 17,375 literate Negroes 21 years of age and over, 958 are registered.

In the city of Birmingham, among the most progressive of the industrialized Negro group, out of 55,355 Negroes 21 years of age and over who can read and write, less than 1,000 are registered voters.

In Mississippi, according to a careful inquiry made in 1907, there are at present 850 Negroes registered, out of a total literate Negro population, 21 years of age and over, of (1920) 200,782. A resident of the state writes:

"The requirements for registration in this state are that the applicants must be able to 'read and write', or understand the Constitution when read to them" and must have paid their poll tax for the past two years prior to the time at which they offer for registration.

"The Clerk of the Circuit Court in each county, or his deputy, is the sole judge of every one's ability to qualify for registration and he is invariably a Democrat and adamant. All white folk are 'qualified'. If a white person cannot read or write, such person is always able to 'understand the constitution when read'. Hence, all white folk vote.

"When a colored man comes up to register, as a rule, he is either unceremoniously ordered out of the office with an oath before a question even has been asked; or is told by the clerk that he is busy and hasn't time to register him; or is given something to read or asked a question, only to have the registration book closed, slammed to and he told that he cannot qualify."

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'The Negro vote is smaller now than a year ago, since the last legislature called for a new registration and it appears that it is a most difficult matter to get as many on the rolls as were registered before. For example, in Hinds, the largest county in the State, there were 98 Negroes registered a year ago, but only 60 now'."

In the state of Georgia, out of 369,511 Negroes, 21 years of age and over who can read and write, no one knows or is able to find out, apparently, how many Negroes are registered. During the year 1926, 90,000 Negroes paid poll taxes and should have been entitled to vote. It is doubtful, however, if as many as 10,000 actually voted.

From Chatham County, where 22,678 Negroes, 21 years of age and over can read and write, there were 2,200 registered Negro voters in 1922 and 900 in 1927.

In Floyd County, where there are 2,488 Negroes, 21 years of age and over who can read and write, there are 120 colored women and 154 colored men who are registered.

In Texas the difficulties are illustrated by one incident brought to attention 1913. Marion County, Texas, has a population of 10,333, of which 3,367 are Negroes. There are 2,143 whites 21 years of age and over, and 2,937 Negroes. Forty-three of the whites are illiterate and 855 of the Negroes. It would look as though at least 1,500 of the Negroes were persons of intelligence and thrift, because they owned, in 1913, 85% of the cultivated land and paid, outside the corporation taxes, over 50% of the taxes. Many Negroes owned farms of 1,000 acres and more,—one owning 3,200 acres. The Negroes owned 23 cotton gins, 25 grist mills, 32 <sup>saw</sup> mills <sup>and</sup> 17 shingle mills. There were 25 small merchants and one colored physician whose practice was 50% white. The six months <sup>Colored</sup> County School was "fairly good". The

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town school in Jefferson ran nine months and had ten grades. And yet, in the face of that, the following election notice was issued Tuesday, September 3rd, 1918.

TO THE PEOPLE OF JEFFERSON

THE ELECTION TO BE HELD TUESDAY, SEPT. 3RD.

IS FOR THE PURPOSE OF VOTING TO REPEAL THE STOCK LAW OR ALLOWING IT TO STAND AS IT IS.

It was unanimously voted by the Council to allow all White Citizens, Men and Women in the City of Jefferson, 21 years of age to vote on this question as the Council wants to know how the people stand on it. The people who are in favor of Repealing this law are willing that an Ordinance be passed allowing stock to run at large from 6 a.m. until 7 p.m. from 1st day of April until 1st day of December which would be 8 months in the year and put them up the remaining 4 months. You are all interested.

SO COME OUT AND VOTE.

THE COMMITTEE

It must be remembered that a Stock Law, which regulates the fencing of crops and the running at large of stock, ~~and~~ is of *great* ~~fatal~~ *fatal* importance, both to the farmer and the small ~~city~~ *town* worker.

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~~In Florida and Arkansas the situation is similar.~~

It might be assumed that this practical disfranchisement of the Negro chiefly by race and not by condition had no effect upon the state and nation, but simply upon him; but the singular thing is and the <sup>point</sup> ~~thing~~ which this paper is seeking to emphasize, that this disfranchisement of the Negro has had an astonishing effect on the voting of other persons in the states concerned and in the whole nation so far as the mass of voters <sup>is</sup> ~~are~~ concerned.

First, in the <sup>Southern</sup> states it encourages oligarchy. Secondly, it enables cliques to nullify, not simply the 14th and 15th Amendments but the 19th Amendment, giving the right vote to women. And finally, it entirely vitiates the normal distribution of voting power throughout the nation. Let us take these points up in order.

One of the most interesting statements on clique government in the South comes from Henry W. Anderson, <sup>a rich white Virginia politician,</sup> who spoke at the Institute of Public Affairs held at the University of Virginia, August 19, 1927: ~~Mr. Anderson is a white Virginian,~~

"The Negroes were disfranchised. The Negro vote has since been so small that it is no longer a material factor in the political situation. But the process of disfranchisement did not stop there. The machinery of discrimination, devised primarily for this purpose, was then employed by the dominant party organization to effect a disqualification of a large proportion of the white population opposed to that organization, while unchallenged control of the political group permitted or encouraged political corruption. As a result of these measures the vote qualified or cast in the Southern States has been so reduced that it includes only a small minority of the population. So small is this vote that the State and local office-holders constitute or easily control a majority. Governors and other State officers are sometimes elected by less than 10 per cent of the population of voting age."

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36-2-9

Let us see how far we can illustrate this state of affairs by figures: we will take eleven Southern states—Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Texas. We have the following facts as to the increase of population and of voting population in the presidential elections.

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	Population		
	1870	1880	1890
Virginia	1,225,163	1,512,565	1,655,890
North Carolina	1,071,361	1,399,750	1,617,949
South Carolina	705,606	995,577	1,151,149
Georgia	1,184,109	1,542,180	1,837,353
Florida	187,748	269,493	391,422
Alabama	996,992	1,262,505	1,513,401
Mississippi	827,922	1,131,597	1,289,600
Arkansas	484,471	802,525	1,128,211
Louisiana	726,915	939,946	1,118,588
Oklahoma			258,657
Texas	818,579	1,591,740	2,335,527
<i>Total</i>	8,228,826	11,457,878	14,197,747

	1900	1910	1920
	Virginia	1,854,565	2,061,612
North Carolina	1,893,810	2,206,287	2,559,123
South Carolina	1,340,316	1,515,400	1,683,724
Georgia	2,216,331	2,609,121	2,895,832
Florida	528,542	752,619	968,470
Alabama	1,828,697	2,138,093	2,348,174
Mississippi	1,551,270	1,797,114	1,790,618
Arkansas	1,311,564	1,574,449	1,752,204
Louisiana	1,381,625	1,656,388	1,798,509
Oklahoma	790,391	1,657,155	2,028,293
Texas	3,048,710	3,896,542	4,663,228
<i>Total</i>	17,745,821	21,884,778	24,797,353



The presidential vote during this time has been as follows:

1872.....1,238,141	1900.....1,572,414
1876.....1,606,230	1904.....1,091,679
1880.....1,555,534	1908.....1,302,664
1884.....1,682,314	1912.....1,538,386
1888.....1,808,964	1916.....1,857,240
1892.....1,870,948	1920.....2,662,588
1896.....1,945,463	1924.....2,865,747

*91 we combine the population  
1890-1920 and the votes  
1892 & 1920, the final the population  
has increased 75% and the votes 42%  
which the dividing of the election by women suffrage*

The population in these states increased over 200 per cent, but the

voting population increased only ~~50%~~ <sup>since 1870</sup> over 1880, and 131% over 1872, despite woman suffrage. In other words, ~~no larger number of persons are voting today in the South than would have been voting if we had had woman suffrage right after the war.~~ <sup>we have in the South today not only a</sup>

Moreover, the increase <sup>of voters</sup> from 1904 to 1924 is mainly in North Carolina, Oklahoma and Texas. If we take the five states of Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi and South Carolina, we have this result:

	Population		
	1870	1880	1890
Alabama	995,992	1,262,505	1,513,401
Georgia	1,184,109	1,542,180	1,837,353
Louisiana	726,915	939,946	1,118,588
Mississippi	827,922	1,131,597	1,289,600
South Carolina	705,606	995,577	1,151,149
<i>Total</i>	<i>4,441,544</i>	<i>5,871,805</i>	<i>6,910,091</i>

  

	1900	1910	1920
Alabama	1,828,697	2,138,093	2,548,174
Georgia	2,216,331	2,609,121	2,895,832
Louisiana	1,381,625	1,656,388	1,798,509
Mississippi	1,551,270	1,797,114	1,790,618
South Carolina	1,340,316	1,515,400	1,683,724
<i>Total</i>	<i>8,318,239</i>	<i>9,716,116</i>	<i>10,517,057</i>

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-15-  
PRESIDENTIAL VOTE

	1872	1876	1880	1884
Alabama	<del>159,716</del>	<del>170,252</del>	<del>152,048</del>	<del>155,027</del>
Georgia	138,906	180,534	157,525	143,610
Louisiana	128,692	145,771	104,143	108,887
Mississippi	129,463	154,778	116,401	120,019
South Carolina	94,993	182,776	170,949	91,626
	<u>661,770</u>	<u>844,091</u>	<u>701,066</u>	<u>619,163</u>

	1888	1892	1896	1900
Alabama	<del>175,510</del>	<del>232,757</del>	<del>194,373</del>	<del>154,754</del>
Georgia	142,703	221,586	163,283	118,152
Louisiana	115,890	115,565	101,045	67,904
Mississippi	116,007	52,727	70,472	57,459
South Carolina	79,565	70,492	68,958	50,862
	<u>329,675</u>	<u>393,127</u>	<u>598,092</u>	<u>449,141</u>

	1904	1908	1912	1916
Alabama	<del>103,794</del>	<del>101,743</del>	<del>117,879</del>	<del>123,077</del>
Georgia	108,357	115,748	121,273	133,057
Louisiana	52,908	74,849	79,377	86,333
Mississippi	53,953	55,528	54,528	86,156
South Carolina	55,139	53,355	50,340	63,551
	<u>377,151</u>	<u>424,323</u>	<u>433,797</u>	<u>499,434</u>

	1920	1924
Alabama	<del>241,070</del>	<del>156,053</del>
Georgia	151,347	156,087
Louisiana	126,057	121,951
Mississippi	82,492	112,463
South Carolina	66,440	50,751
	<u>667,406</u>	<u>617,377</u>

36-2-14

is seen here: the disfranchisement of the Negro (1872-73).  
His disfranchisement first by intimidation (1830-34) and then by  
law (1890-1904); then a slow increase of the white vote, accelerated  
by the 19th Amendment in 1920 but checked in 1924.

The effect of the 19th Amendment is interesting: Not only  
Negroes but white men of these states gradually stopped voting after  
Negro disfranchisement; the million voters of 1892 falling to less  
than 400,000 in 1904. A hundred thousand were added to the polls,  
1904-15, although a million and a half had been added to the population.  
A hundred and fifty thousand would come to the polls right after the  
adoption of the woman's suffrage except that out of a possible two  
million and 50,000 of these disappeared four years later in spite of a  
million increase in population.

In other words, in these five states, out of a total of 5,145,385  
persons 21 years of age and over, there were 555,512 votes cast  
in 1920. There were in this election, therefore, disfranchised  
voluntarily or involuntarily, 4,489,770 persons. Subtracting 10,000  
Negroes actually voting from the total number of Negroes 21 years  
of age and over, we have 2,315,001 Negroes disfranchised. But we  
also have 2,297,799 whites disfranchised, which is a fair indication  
of the cost of Negro disfranchisement in these five states.

VOTERS—SOUTH—1920.

	<u>White</u>	<u>Negro</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Votes</u>	<u>Disfranchised 1920</u>
South Carolina	403,031	375,930	779,031	55,150	713,841
Georgia	345,375	575,530	1,421,303	143,715	1,272,690
Alabama	702,215	441,150	1,145,395	241,070	902,585
Mississippi	422,415	455,665	873,105	82,490	793,114
Louisiana	511,995	559,351	924,184	117,934	807,100
	1,919,031	2,206,304	5,145,385	555,512	4,489,770

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36-2-16

	Estimated Negroes Voting	Negroes Disfranchised	Whites Disfranchised
South Carolina	2,000	374,930	327,711
Georgia	10,000	535,370	703,530
Alabama	5,000	433,130	434,105
Mississippi	1,000	451,100	542,434
Louisiana	<u>1,000</u> 19,300	<u>353,351</u> 2,315,771	<u>442,243</u> 2,394,799

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*There is one consideration which, in the opinion of some, modifies these figures.*

In each one of these states there is practically but one party and a "white primary". <sup>Explicitly</sup> To make the exclusion of the Negro voter doubly sure a system <sup>came into</sup> ~~is in~~ vogue by which only white voters are admitted to the dominant party primary and the ~~main~~ <sup>was</sup> condition of admittance is a promise to abide by the decision of the primary. Also, effort is made to discourage any minority party from holding a primary. In the five states mentioned above the voting in the primary greatly exceeds that in the regular election.

86-2-17

This means that in order to vote at all the white voter must first disfranchise himself so far as having any voice as to the major principles which form the chief matters of difference between parties. Practically his vote is confined to choosing between individuals who will carry out principles which he must accept before voting at all.

Further, however, this initial and fatal difficulty, we have the following votes in the primary election and in the regular election of 1931 as reported by the National Get-Out-The-Vote Club. <sup>\* Note</sup> [No figures are available for Mississippi which illustrates another difficulty: the primary election is conceived usually as a private affair and the returns are not certified to the Federal Government. State official reports are furnished, but the party managers are alone responsible for the accuracy and even for the full publicity of these reports. Here is every temptation for concealing and even falsifying facts.]

In ~~the~~ <sup>of the</sup> four states mentioned, 329,519 people voted in the regular election, while 722,271 voted in the primary election, ~~or an increase of~~. If it is assumed that participation in the primary is some index



of political interest, then the vote of the five states that we are studying ought to be quoted as 1 1/3 million rather than 300,000. <sup>But</sup> <sup>Even</sup> this is not more than a third the number of voters that a normal population of 10 1/2 millions should furnish under universal suffrage. It shows, not simply the disfranchisement of practically all of the Negro voters, forming 40% of the population in these states, but that <sup>(even if we give some weight to this)</sup> <sup>white primary</sup> ~~also~~ nearly two million white voters were simultaneously disfranchised.

81-2-96

In other words, the effort to disfranchise a million and a half Negro voters has cost the disfranchisement of nearly two million white voters, even if one assumes that the primary election is a fair example of the exercise of political power, <sup>which of course it is not.</sup>

Outside these five states with a single effective party and the disfranchisement of the Negro as such, there are other parts of the South where the Negro votes to some extent and <sup>where</sup> two parties exist. Virginia, North Carolina, Oklahoma and Texas represent such states. North Carolina has gained recently a new social leadership, with the result that education has expanded, both in University and common school, and mob violence curbed. New attention has been given to health and the prevention of crime. With this has come, both as cause and effect, a small but increasing participation of the Negro in voting.

Out of a population amounting to 1,210,727 in 1920, men and women, there voted in the Presidential Election of 1924, 482,337. These voters came from 857,971 white adults and 343,753 colored adults. It is probable, from what I can learn, that at least 20,000 Negroes voted in that election and the number of Negro voters has since increased. This has been made possible because the minority party is a real opposition and both parties bid for the Negro vote. Also, as a consequence the regular election records 100,000 more votes than the primary elections.

This does not mean by any means that Negro disfranchisement is at an end or anywhere near it in North Carolina. Over 300,000 Negroes and an equal number of whites are disfranchised voluntarily and involuntarily in North Carolina.

Oklahoma and Texas also represent cases where the attempt to disfranchise the Negro is made with a two party system. One party seeks to keep the Negro from voting at all in its primary while the other seeks his vote but attempts to deprive him of any voice in the party councils and any chance to hold office. The results in Texas are as follows:

36-2-19  
"In the Democratic Primary elections, the full vote of white Democrats and Republicans men and women are cast, or in other words, 750,000 to 800,000 turn out and vote on Primary election days. <sup>Five</sup> per cent of these 800,000 voters are Negro Democrats, who always vote the Democratic ticket in all elections. There are 300,000 both Negro men and women voters in Texas. They are Republicans; but have not voted for and with the "Lilly White" Republican Party since the date it was organized and given absolute control of the Republican Party Organization in Texas. The "Lilly White" Party was organized 1920, backed by the Harding Administration."

"Ordinarily, in presidential election years approximately 100,000 Negroes qualify in Texas, but under the existing political and partisan systems in vogue in the state, less than 10,000 voted in the election of 1935 ( gubernatorial )."

There are in Texas over 2 1/2 millions of persons 21 years of age and over, of whom 400,000 are black. Over a million persons are disfranchised voluntarily or involuntarily even in the primary election.

There is a similar situation in Oklahoma, with over 400,000 adult whites not voting.

Virginia has a situation similar to Texas. White Republicans held their conventions in hotels where Negroes were not admitted. The Negroes tried to retaliate by voting for the Democrats, but after all the Democrats

were as bad as the Republicans.

36-2-20  
"In the State election of 1921 when the 'lily white' Republicans nominated Mr. H. W. Anderson for governor, and again Negroes had been barred from the State convention, as well as the city and District conventions, ~~it was then~~ we issued an official call for a State Convention of Republicans of Virginia, which was held in the city of Richmond, Monday, September 5, 1921; ~~at which time~~ <sup>here</sup> we nominated a State ticket naming a candidate for ~~any~~ <sup>every</sup> office from governor down. The white papers took it up and called us the 'lily blacks'. At this convention every district in the State was represented, and with a good strong pull and the women voting, we polled more than twenty-five thousand votes for the 'lily black' ticket."

So far in this discussion I have said nothing about the border states. In such former slave states as Delaware, Maryland, the District of Columbia, West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee and Missouri, the Negro is a recognized voter. His political importance varies, but in most of these states it is beginning to be used with some efficiency. He is securing with his votes better public schools in Delaware, equalized *teachers'* salaries and better schoolhouses in Maryland and a new university in Missouri. His general political power has given him excellent schools in the District of Columbia and some social legislation. In Tennessee he has gained a State Normal School and especially he is renewing and consolidating his political power in western Tennessee, in spite of such bitter opposition.

It is not too much to say that almost in exact proportion as fear of Negro participation in politics has been eliminated in these states, there has been a new growth of democracy both among whites and Negroes and an effective interest in social reform.

Many have assumed that this slow but evident enfranchisement of the Negro in the border states is destined to invade the Southern South.

This is probably true but the danger lies in waiting and that danger is ~~is~~ great, not simply to the Negro but to the Nation. In other words, the distortion of the public will which the ~~six~~<sup>five</sup> states of the Worst South, added to the influence of ~~five~~<sup>several</sup> other Southern states, has had upon voting throughout the United States, is such that worse, far worse evils than Negro disfranchisement are already upon us.

It is continually assumed that disfranchisement in the South is a local problem with which the other people in the United States have no right or interest to interfere. There is indeed something of the atmosphere of a gentlemen's agreement in the nullification in the 14th, 15th and 19th Amendments in the South.

This, however, is far from true; and the facts are shown by the number of persons necessary for the election of Congressmen. In the great middle West, for instance, ten million voters elected 127 Congressmen. In New England, seven and a half million voters elected 123 Congressmen. In the border states four million voters elected 58 Congressmen. In the Pacific and Northwestern states, two million voters elected 24 Congressmen; while in the Southwest, six hundred thousand voters elected 9 Congressmen. Contrast this with the fact that in the Southern states 2,175,007 voters elected 94 Congressmen.

If instead of taking the Presidential votes in that year we take the primary votes, we find for the whole South it was 50 per cent larger. But even in that case, something over 3 million voters in the South had as much political power as 4 million voters, <sup>in the Middle West. For every million voters</sup> in New England, 18 Congressmen

**A million voters can elect 45 Congressmen in the South, but only 16 in New England, 13 in the Middle West and 12 on the Pacific coast.** South, 46 Congressmen are elected if we count the regular election, or perhaps 30 if we count the primary election. For each representative it takes 73,000 voters in the Middle West; in New England 54,000; in the South 21,000.

12-2-98

~~In the regular elections and perhaps 20,000 in the primaries.~~

This makes the distortion of public political power so great that it is interesting to note efforts to counteract it in certain places where it would be least expected.

36-2-22

If, for instance, you consider the national conventions of the two great parties, you will remember that theoretically there should be in these conventions a number of delegates equal to twice the number of Senators and Representatives in Congress. But this would give the South an exaggerated representation in either Convention. So at the National Republican Convention of 1824:

Alabama	13	instead of	24
Arkansas	14	"	of 10
Florida	10	"	of 12
Georgia	16	"	of 23
Louisiana	15	"	of 20
Mississippi	15	"	of 20
North Carolina	23	"	of 24
South Carolina	11	"	of 13
Texas	23	"	of 40
Virginia	17	"	of 24

Oklahoma alone has 23 delegates instead of 14-20. This is a net loss of 37 delegates.

And it was even proposed that this rule be put into effect. In this convention, the black delegates from the South were subject to the control of no free electors, but to be composed entirely of venal politicians <sup>white & black who can</sup> to be traded in by the highest bidder. The effort of black folk to escape this incubator and reform the situation is blocked by their own disfranchisement. Thus we may say, period.

On the other hand, turning to the Democratic Convention of 1860 the helpless grandeur of the North, we find each <sup>Southern</sup> state its full



~~In the regular elections and perhaps 20,000 in the primary.~~

This makes the distortion of public political power so great that it is interesting to note efforts to counteract it in certain places where it would be least expected.

36-2-22

If, for instance, you consider the national conventions of the two great parties, you will remember that theoretically there should be in these conventions a number of delegates equal to twice the number of Senators and Representatives in Congress. But this would give the South an exaggerated representation in either Convention. Consequently in the National Republican Convention of 1924:

Alabama	13	instead of	24
Arkansas	14	"	of 19
Florida	10	"	of 12
Georgia	16	"	of 23
Louisiana	15	"	of 20
Mississippi	13	"	of 20
North Carolina	22	"	of 24
South Carolina	11	"	of 13
Texas	23	"	of 40
Virginia	17	"	of 21

Oklahoma alone has 23 delegates instead of 14-20. This is a net loss of 37 delegates.

And it was even proposed that this might be done without doing harm, in this convention, the black delegates from the South were to be put to the control of no free electorate, but to be composed entirely of venal politicians, <sup>white, black who can</sup> to be traded in by the highest bidder. The effort of black folk to escape this incubus and reform the situation is blocked by their own disfranchisement. Thus we see, but profit not.

On the other hand, turning to the Democratic Convention of the <sup>Southern</sup> states, we find each state its full

prota. This, together with the two-thirds voting rule, makes the South political dictator of the nation.

36-2-23

At the eve then, of a presidential election, singular compilations are made. The Democrats can start out assuming the votes of 11 Southern states, with, at present 124 or the 531 electoral votes. They need to fight, therefore, <sup>for</sup> only 143 electoral votes to have the majority of the electoral college. On the other hand, the Republicans must leave out of account 124 electoral votes at the start and of the other 407 electoral votes they can afford to lose only 141.

But if this is the plight of the Republicans, what can be said of any Third Party? It simply has no chance at all. All the fine political theory of the restoring and reforming effect of the Third Party has gone glimmering at the present United States, because any third Party movement must first absolutely concede the 124 electoral votes of the South and then must dislodge the Republicans and Democrats from 143 of their 507 votes in the North. <sup>of the American</sup> In other words, a third party movement in the United States must have <sup>such</sup> an overwhelming majority in the rock-ribbed centers of organized industry and conservative capitalism. <sup>and it can't be won with all kinds of the other methods, by a third party, according to the</sup> At present ~~there~~ please conservative public opinion but it is the old method of sitting on the safety valve and rendering inactive the order processes of social growth and reform.

All this is true, and the United States knows it. But it does not discuss it. Discussions are taboo in Congress, on the public platform, in magazines and newspapers; so that the various facts which make democracy impossible of accomplishment in the United States are not generally apprehended.

We all know that if the most of the people in the United States could vote with freedom and on terms of equality, that even then the problem of effectual democratic control and the triumph of right ideas by

1850 or thereabouts, and were  
in effect the same. The latter  
is a simple fact, but the latter  
all 3 parties, and the latter  
popular, and the latter  
I am not certain if it is a matter  
of course, but the latter  
place, and the latter  
unless he has some other  
party, it is a matter of course.

The party in question is a matter of course,  
and the latter is a matter of course.  
And the latter is a matter of course.  
The latter is a matter of course.  
The latter is a matter of course.  
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The latter is a matter of course.  
The latter is a matter of course.  
The latter is a matter of course.

*have no recent*

proper public officials would just begin. As it is now, we ~~cannot even~~ <sup>have no</sup> ~~gain~~ <sup>recent</sup> democratic control and we only realize this in a crisis. Two ~~events~~ <sup>have</sup> forced some discussion in this matter: the primary elections in Pennsylvania and Illinois and the 18th Amendment. The Middle West ~~is~~ <sup>has</sup> especially incensed and many daily papers have suddenly discovered the ~~value~~ <sup>political</sup> power of the South. Threatening editorials and recrimination over the Illinois and Pennsylvania senators and over the 18th Amendment ~~are appearing~~. <sup>attached</sup> These are but symptoms and the present controversy ~~may die down~~. But ~~As~~ <sup>As</sup> sure as fate some day there is coming in the United States a political controversy with social and economic roots which is going to open suddenly the question as to why the South has 3 times the political power of the west and why New England with its disfranchised foreign workers has more political voice than the west. The protest is not coming simply from Northerners or "friends" of the Negro. It is even coming from the South itself.

As far as the Negro is concerned, his attitude is changing. He is gradually ceasing to plead and prove. He is simply pointing to the known facts: out of a hundred thousand black folk and a hundred thousand whites there will be more blacks who are poor, ignorant, sick and silly than whites. Why this is true he will have his opinion and others theirs. The Negro only insists that in his group there will be thirty, twenty or ten thousand just as intelligent, thrifty and healthy as the majority of whites. He maintains that to treat these men as idiots and criminals is an attack on civilization.

I have no right, of course, to speak for the whole Negro race in America, but speaking for myself and many others, I am tired of the hypocrisy and double-dealing in this country. If race hatred is still so strong in this country that large numbers of Americans would rather overthrow democratic government than to let me vote, then I am willing to acquiesce in disfranchisement and not be counted as a basis of representa-

52-2-95

Questions to Committee by Sen. James H. Doolittle

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tion rather than to see this great experiment in democracy fail.

While most of this study deals with the South because there the effect of disfranchisement is most striking and far reaching, there are other parts of the United States, like New England and certain large cities, where the question of Democratic control by popular vote is acute. Surely it is time for open discussions and careful collection of facts. Americans, let us look the situation squarely in the face. This is no mere question of parish or section or race. It is a vast and pressing problem of Democracy and civilization. Today, and in the United States, Justice is for sale. Laws are bought and paid for. The highest offices are put up at public barter. News and facts are suppressed and twisted by monopoly. Great aggregations of wealth invested in capital and controlled not by their owners but by men who have secured the power of control by every known device, legal and illegal, honest and dishonest, efficient and inefficient, are ruling an increasingly complicated industrial machine in such a way that only intelligent public opinion can secure the best interests of the nation. Today we can not even consult this public opinion. We must, therefore, decide and decide soon. First, the public opinion of what persons in the United States shall rule? Shall it be the public opinion of a small select group of persons of Nordic descent? Shall it be the public opinion of the <sup>rich controlled</sup> ~~main owners~~ of capital? Shall it be the public opinion of college graduates? Shall it be the public opinion of all adult Americans except Negroes, Asiatics and Latins? Or shall we try to make it the public opinion of all intelligent adults? Whatever public opinion rules in the United States it must rule freely and clearly without a system of rotten boroughs and ~~at~~ <sup>disfranchisement</sup> ~~association~~ and cheating. The clearing up and settling of this great question is the vastest problem that faces America today and we must begin its solution now. If we do not, we face sooner or later, chaos and revolution.

52-2-96

Speeches a Critique by the same press who mentioned in the paper