

Hist of Black Am 11500
Exam 2
Ans. Key

Note: This is a summary of what your answers should have entailed. Generally, I do not specify individuals and policies, but you can find these kinds of details in the source material and on the power point presentations on *Woodle*.

1. What brought about Jim Crow laws and disfranchisement in the South in the late 19th century? Why did southern whites commit racial violence and lynching after Reconstruction since they had already regained political dominance? How did Ida B. Wells explain the rise in lynching?

Ans.

The question is about causality and human agency. Black resistance—especially blacks efforts to vote, aspirations of social mobility, etc . . . brought about Jim Crow laws and lynching. The question is also about change over time. Reconstruction ends in 1877, but segregation laws and other forms of white supremacist activity, particularly lynching bloom decades later. Why? White southerners always used racial violence, so that was a constant. But lynching as a specific form of violence was necessary to subdue black efforts for equality since legal forms—Jim crow law and disfranchisement strategies were insufficient. Wells focused on blacks’ political & economic efforts, as well as the hypocrisy of white women and white men. White men’s complaints about rape, in other words, masked their insecurity and, in some cases, the fact that some white women voluntarily had “relations” with black men.

2. Examine the expansion of the black public sphere from Ida B. Wells to A. Philip Randolph’s “Reply to My Critics.” Consider: What was the black public sphere and why was it important? Focusing on the most important historical change during this period, explain how and why the black public sphere expanded during this period.

Ans.

The Black public sphere, more or less, was a forum for African Americans to discuss relevant political issues; it was important because it, in many ways, took the place of black public officials, and it functioned in the such a way that it helped rally the black community. More to the prompts, the bps expanded and change primarily because of a) two great migrations and World War I & II; b) the various political ideologies (new negro/double v) that derived from the two world wars; c) the expansion of black politics, particularly political realignment, the shift from Republicans to Democrats; d) affiliation with the labor movement; and e) expand from litigation to civil disobedience.

3. What brought about the ‘Great Migration’? What made the “New Negro” New? What were some of the global and domestic changes that contributed to the “New Negro Movement? What were the dominant political ideologies that distinguished the New Negro from the old Negro?

Ans.

World War I triggered the Great Migration, as well as various push & pull forces—such as lynching, segregation, voting rights, and industrial jobs; as the first generation born in freedom, this “new” Negro, relentless and brazen, demanded whites to respect their civil rights. Black soldiers participation in the Great War and the New Negro magazines, and more broadly, the black public sphere, framed the black struggle within a global context. These ideologies include black nationalism and anti-capitalism, which were different from Du Bois’s civil rights approach and BTW’s bootstraps approach (Old negro).

Section II.

II. Document Analysis: **Choose One**=50 points

Please respond to all prompts in essay form. The best answers will be those that demonstrate expertise of the Primary Source itself & the historical period, including relevant events, personalities, policies, etc . . . , in order to respond to the prompts.

1. What does Booker T. Washington mean by “Cast down your bucket where you are”?

Regarding Reconstruction, Washington writes, “Ignorant and inexperienced, it is not strange that in the first years of our new life we began at the top instead of at the bottom; that a seat in Congress or the state legislature was sought than real estate or industrial skill.”

How are his ideas about Reconstruction a reflection of the Jim Crow era? And why does he describe Reconstruction as he does? What is his main point? How is this related to his goals?

Ans.

BTW urged both blacks and whites to take advantage of the economic resources; this meant that blacks should remain in the south rather than migrate north and pursue the economic and political rights. BTW tried to appeal to southern and northern whites, because he wanted to assure them that blacks would not pursue political rights (voting) but would still function, as they had in the past, as a source of cheap labor. As we know, and here’s how this reflects the Jim Crow era, lynching and racial violence had become so “normal” in the south that many black leaders, especially those living in the south (unlike Du Bois), chose to “accommodate” white supremacy. Thus the goal of insuring a black economic infrastructure prompted BTW to publicly denounce politics and even “liberal arts” education. As he infamously stated, “in all things that are purely social we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual process.” Of course, as Ida B. Wells makes clear, this approach was limited.

2. Langston Hughes’s “The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain,” what does he mean by the “Racial mountain”? He writes, “one of the most promising of the young Negro poets said to me once, ‘I want to be a poet—not a Negro poet,’ meaning, I believe, ‘I want to write like a white poet.’”

What role did popular culture and science play in creating the “racial mountain”? How were the “Negro Renaissance” and “New Negro Movement” answers to the “Racial Mountain”?

Ans.

The racial mountain is as an American standardized form of racism, and, in the case of the artist, it referred specifically to how black artists internalized racism; popular culture ensured that racism was distributed throughout American culture in post cards (lynching), consumer products (Aunt Jemima), and theater (minstrels). Scientific racism was represented by craniology as well as Frederick Hoffman. The Renaissance and New Negro movement tried to promote the humanity of blacks as well as, in the case of the Garvey movement, prove the superiority of blacks. Anti-capitalists, on the other hand, targeted capitalists and racism as the culprits. In this way, if capitalism and racism were the problem then cultural explanations would hold no legitimacy. Hughes's idea then reflected partly black nationalist and anti-capitalist sensibilities, since he centered black cultural legitimacy (though not as far as Garvey) and criticized the black elite, through without directly critiquing capitalism as an economic system.

3. "The Negro-Art Hokum" Why does George Schuyler, an African American socialist (anti-capitalist), claim that "Negro art 'made in America' is non-existent"? What does Schuyler mean when he describes "Coleridge-Taylor,[and]Edward Wilmot Blyden" as "Negroes; yet their work shows the impress of nationality rather than race"? How are his ideas regarding "Negro Art" a reflection of his ideas as an anti-capitalist? And how is this reflective of the New Negro movement?

Full quote: "Consider Coleridge-Taylor, Edward Wilmot Blyden, Claude McKay, the Englishmen; Pushkin, the Russian; Bridgewater, the Pole; Antar, the Arabian; Latino, the Spaniard; Dumas, pere and fils, the Frenchmen; and Paul Lawrence Dunbar, Charles W. Chesnutt, and James Weldon Johnson, the Americans. All Negroes; yet their work show the impress of nationality rather than race. They all reveal the psychology and culture of their environment—their color is incidental."

Ans.

This primary source was primarily about Schuyler, as an anti-capitalist, trying to dissuade people from accepting "racial difference." Thus, he argued that there could be no "Negro Art" since blacks and whites were culturally the same, and that "sameness" was based on their shared environment—nationality. This is essential, since he reinforces commonality between blacks and whites, and thereby can emphasize what they might also share—the common experience of being oppressed as workers (remember DuBois's "African Roots of War").

Thus, his rhetoric about nationality, region, etc . . . attempted to destabilize the notion that "race" had anything to do with culture. If this was true, according to his logic, inequality was the result of environment or class and not racial difference. This is why Schuyler rejects "race" as an explanation from either Garvey or a white racist. Furthermore, his ideas represent the New Negro era, since his ideas reflected some black activists move towards socialism and explicitly economic issues, such as Randolph and others, not solely voting rights (the debate between DuBois & BTW).

4. In “A Reply to My Critics,” A. Philip Randolph writes:

“That the government is an accommodative and repressive organism which is constantly balancing pressures from conflicting social forces in the local and national communities, and without regard to the question of right or wrong, it inevitably moves in the direction of the pressure of the greatest challenge.”

How does this quote help explain the relationships among the federal government, southern state governments, and African Americans since Reconstruction (1865-1877) to the end of the 1920s?

How and why does the relationship change among state governments, the federal government, and African Americans change during the period between the Great Depression and the end of World War II?

Ans:

This quote helps us understand how the federal and state governments played a critical role in the political possibilities of African Americans. As we know, as part of the Compromise of 1877, the federal government left the south and in the hands of southern states. This helps explain the context for the emergence of Jim Crow in the south in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The two wars and the migrations, too, help explain the rise in black political power. As blacks move north, they embrace the franchise as a path for political transformation, establishing a larger black civil society and an expanded public sphere. The Great Depression, similarly, triggers federal involvement nationally, including, of course, the south. The New Deal programs and blacks entrance into the labor movement and shift from the Republican Party to the Democrats helps explain black mobilization and the rise of the civil rights movement.

Thus as northerners with more political rights and an expanded political base, blacks could then pressure FDR in a way they couldn't before they moved to the north and became part of the Democratic Party and the labor movement.