

Blacks in the New World
Edited by August Meier and John H. Bracey

A list of books in the series appears at the back of this book.

RACE RIOT

Chicago in the Red Summer
of 1919

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University of Illinois Press
Urbana and Chicago

The Red Summer and the Red Scare

THE PARKS AND BATHING BEACHES," Chicago's leading black newspaper, the *Defender*, reminded its readers in July 1919, "are much more inviting these warm days than State Street. A hint to the wise should be sufficient." Specifically, the *Defender* recommended Lake Michigan's 25th Street beach, where there were free towels and lockers and where "every precaution is being taken to safeguard the interests of the bathers. The *Whip*, another of the city's black newspapers, also boosted the attractions to be found at the 25th Street beach. There were not only bathing beauties there but even a black lifeguard, who, unlike some of his white counterparts, was courteous and helpful. So come to 25th Street, the *Whip* urged, and help Chicago's black people "make this beach [their] Atlantic City."¹

¹ *Chicago Defender*, July 5, 1919; *Chicago Whip*, July 5, 1919. Some people called the beach the 26th Street beach, others the 25th Street beach.

For teenage boys, however, such advice was superfluous, especially as the temperature on Sunday, July 27, soared into the nineties. Fourteen-year-old John Harris was an energetic teenager, as were his companions that day, four boys named Williams.² Charles and Lawrence Williams were brothers, who with Harris and Paul Williams, unrelated, all lived on Chicago's South Side in the vicinity of Harris' house at 53rd and State, while Eugene Williams lived in another neighborhood, about fifteen blocks to the north. The four lads from farther south in the city had met Eugene at the beach.

The heat was already stifling by early afternoon when the boys hopped onto a produce truck driving north on Wabash Avenue. It was an Autocar, "a real speed wagon." At 26th Street, the truck slowed down again, this time to cross the streetcar tracks, and the boys alighted. They walked east and they walked fast, practically jogging the seven blocks to the lake. Perspiring freely and carrying their rolled-up swimming trunks, they were naturally eager to get to the cooling water and to the homemade raft that awaited them at the beach. But they also moved hurriedly because the territory through which they were passing was the domain of an Irish gang that had attacked them several times before with rocks.

The boys were not headed for the black-patronized 25th Street beach; nor did they intend to try to swim at the white beach at 29th Street, behind the Michael Reese Hospital. They were going to their own, very private spot, which was located just in between. Familiar landmarks loomed up as they walked east on 26th Street—the Burnham Park Police Station, the Hydrox Ice Cream Company, the tracks of the Illinois Central, and finally, at the lake front, a little island which the boys called the "hot and cold." Located behind the

² Interview with Mr. John Turner Harris, Chicago, June 26, 1969. Now a social worker in Chicago, Mr. Harris spent the better part of a day describing the events of July 27, 1919. Fearing punishment by his mother for swimming on a Sunday, Mr. Harris never told the police what he saw that day; in fact, the only person he told was Eugene Williams' mother, at Eugene's funeral.

Keeley Brewery and Consumers Ice, the "hot and cold" got its name from the effluence discharged by these companies. The waters of Lake Michigan could be as cold as the melting ice from Consumers, yet the run-off from the vats at the brewery was not only hot but chemically potent as well. It could even temporarily bleach a black person white. "It was hot," John Harris recalled, "and Jesus, I would be as white [as a white man] when I got done—so actually no women or nothing ever come through, so we [often] didn't even wear a suit, just take our clothes off and go down to the bank. . . ."

Tied up at the "hot and cold" was the raft. The product of several weeks of work by a dozen-and-a-half teenagers, the raft was "a tremendous thing," fully fourteen by nine feet, with a "big chain with a hook on one of the big logs, and we'd put a rope through it and tie it." Harris and his friends were far from being expert swimmers, but they could hang onto the raft and propel it forward by kicking; and, occasionally, "we could swim under water and dive under water and come up," always making sure, however, that they were within easy distance of the raft. "As long as the raft was there," Harris noted, "we were safe." The goal of the youths that Sunday was a marker nailed on a post several hundred yards from shore. At about two o'clock, the boys pushed off, angling their raft south toward the post—and toward 29th Street.

Meanwhile, at the 29th Street beach, the fury of racial hatred had just erupted. Defying the unwritten law which designated that beach as exclusively white, several black men and women had strolled to 29th Street determined to enter the water. Curses, threatening gestures, and rocks had frightened the intruders away. Minutes later, however, their numbers reinforced, the blacks reappeared, this time hurling rocks. The white bathers fled. But the blacks' possession of the beach was only temporary; behind a barrage of stones white bathers and numerous sympathizers returned. The battle that ensued was frightening in its violence but it merely anticipated Chicago's long-feared race war. Sparked by the conflict at the

beach, all the racial fears and hates of the past months and years in Chicago would explode in bloody warfare.³

Innocently unaware of the savage exchange of projectiles and angry words at 29th Street, the five boys continued to "swim, kick, dive, and play around." Passing by the breakwater near 26th Street, the youths noticed a white man. He was standing on the end of the breakwater about seventy-five feet from the raft, and he was hurling rocks at them. It was simply "a little game," the boys thought. "We were watching him," said Harris. "He'd take a rock and throw it, and we would duck it—this sort of thing. . . . As long as we could see him, he never could hit us, because after all a guy throwing that far is not a likely shot. And you could see the brick coming. . . ." For several minutes he hurled rocks; and "one fellow would say, 'Look out, here comes one,' and we would duck. It was a game that we would play." It is not clear whether the rock thrower was playing the same game as the boys, or whether he was acting in angry retaliation against the black intrusion at 29th Street. One thing is certain, though: the next act in this drama brought pure tragedy.

Eugene Williams' head had just bobbed out of the water when one of the other boys diverted his attention. "And just as he turned his head this fellow threw [the rock] and it struck him . . . on the . . . forehead." John Harris could tell that Eugene was injured, for he slid back into the water; not diving, "he just sort of relaxed." Harris dived down to try to help, but, as he remembered, Eugene "grabbed my right ankle, and, hell, I got scared. I shook him off." By that time the boys were in about fifteen feet of water. Gasping for breath and panic-stricken, Harris surfaced and "began to shudder." "I shook away from him to come back up, and you

³ Peter M. Hoffman (comp.), *The Race Riots: Biennial* [Cook County Coroner's] *Report, 1918-1919* (Chicago: n.pub., n.d.), 20, 27-28; *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 28, 1919; *Chicago Defender*, August 2, 1919; Joseph A. Logsdon, "The Rev. Archibald J. Carey and the Negro in Chicago Politics" (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Chicago, 1961), 71.

could see the blood coming up, and the fellows were all excited. . . ." Groaning something like "Oh, my God," the man on the breakwater then ran toward 29th Street.

"Let's get the lifeguard," shouted Harris as he pushed off from the raft. Dog-paddling and swimming under water, Harris finally reached shore. Then he dashed to the 25th Street beach to tell the head lifeguard, Butch, who "blew a whistle and sent a boat around." But by that time there was nothing that anybody could do. Thirty minutes later, divers recovered Eugene's body.⁴

Also by that time, anger had begun to replace the panic and the awe of the black boys. With the black policeman from 25th Street, they marched to 29th Street and pointed out the man they believed to be the rock thrower to the white policeman on duty, Officer Daniel Callahan. But Callahan would not only not arrest the man; he even refused to permit the black policeman to arrest him. As the policemen argued, Harris and his friends ran back to 25th Street and "told the colored people what was happening, and they started running this way," to 29th Street.⁵

⁴ Harris interview; *Chicago Herald-Examiner*, August 3, 1919; Hoffman, *Coroner's Report*, 27-28. It should be pointed out that Mr. Harris' relating of the events of July 27, 1919, conflicts at times with the coroner's version. The coroner contended, for example, that Williams was an excellent swimmer, but there is no indication of his source for this information, and the evidence seems to be to the contrary. He also held that "a superficial abrasion" on the decedent's body could not of itself have caused death; true, but a rock hitting one's body, however slightly, could cause panic and result in drowning. It is possible, too, that had the coroner had an opportunity to interview Mr. Harris, his findings might have been quite different.

⁵ Walter White, "Notes on Chicago of WFW," September 17, 1919, in NAACP Papers (NAACP-2), in the possession of the Middle Atlantic Youth Division of the NAACP, Washington, D.C.; Juvenile Protective Association, *18th Annual Report, 1918-1919* (Chicago: n.pub., ca. 1920), 23-25; Chicago Commission on Race Relations, *The Negro in Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1922), 4-5, 11, 24, 34, 596-97; *New York Times*, July 28, 1919; *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 28, 1919; *Chicago Herald-Examiner*, July 28, 1919; *Chicago Defender*, August 2, 1919; *Chicago Broad Ax*, August 2, 1919.

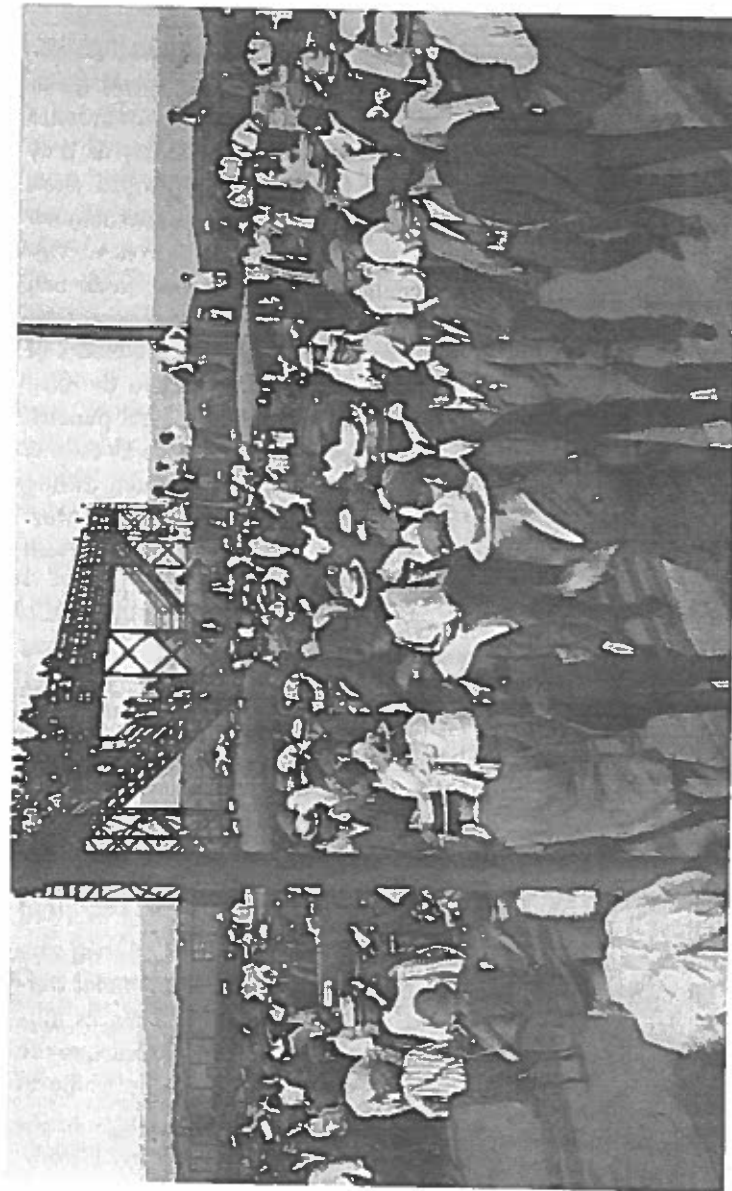
Panic had again overtaken the black youths. Hastily gathering up their clothes, they sprinted along 26th Street "all the way to Wabash." "We were putting our clothes on as fast as we were running." Boarding the first bus that appeared, they rode to the 55th Street beach, where they collapsed on the sand, thoroughly shaken and still panting. "I wasn't going home [right away]," said Harris, "because I knew I had better cool myself down. . . ." Also, he had left his cap and shoes at 26th Street, and he had to think of a way to explain their disappearance to his mother.⁶

The argument at 29th Street raged on. And in the midst of it, Officer Callahan, while continuing to ignore the exhortations of blacks to arrest the alleged murderer, arrested a black man on the complaint of a white. In the meantime, distorted rumors of the drowning and the brawl had assumed exaggerated proportions on the South Side. Whites told each other in alarmed voices that a white swimmer had drowned after being struck with a rock thrown by a black. A rumor in the nearby "black belt" was that Officer Callahan had not only caused Williams' death by preventing expert swimmers from rescuing him, but that he had even "held [his] gun on [the] colored crowd and permitted white rioters to throw bricks and stones at [the] colored." Hundreds of angry blacks and whites swarmed to the beach. The crowd was tumultuous when a patrol wagon pulled up at 29th Street to put the arrested black man in custody. Volleys of bricks and rocks were exchanged. Then a black man, James Crawford, drew a revolver and fired into a cluster of policemen, wounding one of them. A black officer returned the fire, fatally injuring Crawford. Suddenly other pistol shots reverberated. The restless onlookers, many of them armed, had their cue. The gunfire had signaled the start of a race war.⁷

Once ignited on July 27, the rioting raged virtually uncon-

⁶ Harris interview.

⁷ See footnote 5; and interview with Mr. A. L. Jackson, Chicago, June 27, 1969.



Beginning of a race riot—blacks and whites leaving Chicago's 29th Street beach after the drowning of Eugene Williams

trolled for the greater part of five days. Day and night white toughs assaulted isolated blacks, and teenage black mobsters beat white peddlers and merchants in the black belt. As rumors of atrocities circulated throughout the city, members of both races craved vengeance. White gunmen in automobiles sped through the black belt shooting indiscriminately as they passed, and black snipers fired back. Roaming mobs shot, beat, and stabbed to death their victims. The undermanned police force was an ineffectual deterrent to the waves of violence which soon overflowed the environs of the black belt and flooded the North and West Sides and the Loop, Chicago's downtown business district. Only several regiments of state militiamen and a cooling rain finally quenched the passions of the rioters, and even then sporadic outbursts punctuated the atmosphere for another week. The toll was awesome. Police officers had fatally wounded seven black men during the riot. Vicious mobs and lone gunmen had brutally murdered an additional sixteen blacks and fifteen whites, and well over 500 Chicagoans of both races had sustained injuries.⁸

The bloodshed inflicted an ineradicable scar on the city's reputation, and it outraged the sensibilities of countless Americans, black and white. But the Chicago race riot of 1919 should not have been altogether surprising to men and women who had read the chronicle of America's past, with its history, if not its tradition, of racial violence. Racial bloodshed struck New York City in the 1830's and in 1863; race riots erupted in Cincinnati in 1829 and 1841; in Utica and Palmyra, New York, in the 1830's; in Philadelphia in 1819 and at least five separate times in the 1830's and 1840's; various northern cities experienced interracial labor conflict during the Civil War; the races clashed in numerous places during Reconstruction, and at Wilmington, North Carolina, in 1898.⁹ Add to these outbreaks the violence of the traffic in

⁸ For a detailed description of the riot, see Chapter II.

⁹ See, for example, Sam Bass Warner, *The Private City: Philadel-*

slaves and of oppressive slaveholders, revolts by slaves, vigilante tactics of the Ku Klux Klan, election riots in various Southern states in the 1880's and 1890's, and thousands of lynchings, and one can begin to understand this history.

The advent of the twentieth century brought no surcease to racial bloodshed in America. The North as well as the South saw a burgeoning of racial violence in the first decades of the new century. Monuments to this fact were the riots in New York City in 1900, Springfield, Ohio, in 1904, Atlanta, Georgia, and Greensburg, Indiana, in 1906, and Springfield, Illinois, in 1908.¹⁰

Clearly, urban racial violence was a national problem. White Northerners could no longer scoff at the barbarity of their Southern countrymen. "I'm not sure," the well-known satirist Mr. Dooley wrote at the turn of the century, "that I'd not as lave be gently lynched in Mississippi as baten to death in New York." The North had no corner on racial justice, he added; quite the contrary. "I'm not so much throubled about th' naygur whim he lives among his opprissors as I am whin he falls into the hands iv his liberators. Whin he's in th' south he can make up his mind to be lynched soon or late an' give his

phia in Three Periods of Its Growth (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1968), 125-57; James McCague, *The Second Rebellion: The Story of the New York City Draft Riots of 1863* (N.Y.: Dial, 1968); W. H. Lofton, "Northern Labor and the Negro during the Civil War," *Journal of Negro History*, XXXIV (July 1949), 251-273; Henry L. West, "The Race War in North Carolina," *The Forum*, XXVI (January 1899), 578-91; John Hope Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom* (N.Y.: Knopf, 1967), 234-37, 278-79, 330, 337, 341, 439.

¹⁰ Gilbert Osofsky, *Harlem: The Making of a Ghetto* (N.Y.: Harper Torchbooks, 1968), 46-52; Ray Stannard Baker, *Following the Color Line* (N.Y.: Harper Torchbooks, 1964), 124-29, 160-61, 201 ff.; Ray Stannard Baker, "The Color Line in the North," *American Magazine*, LXV (February 1908), 345-57; Charles Crowe, "Racial Violence and Social Reform—Origins of the Atlanta Riot of 1906," *Journal of Negro History*, LIII (July 1968), 234-56; Crowe, "Racial Massacre in Atlanta, September 22, 1906," *Journal of Negro History*, LIV (April 1969), 150-73; James L. Crouthamel, "The Springfield Race Riot of 1908," *Journal of Negro History*, XLV (July 1960), 164-81; William English Walling, "The Race War in the North," *Independent*, LXV (September 3, 1908), 529-34.

attention to his other pleasures iv . . . wurrakin' f'r th' man that used to own him an' now on'y owes him his wages. But 'tis th' divvle's own hardship f'r a coon to . . . be pursooed be a mob iv abolitionists till he's dhruven to seek polis protection, which . . . is th' polite name f'r fracture iv th' skull."¹¹

East St. Louis, Illinois, stands as corroboration of Mr. Dooley's observation. Fueled by bigoted and alarmist trade unionists, self-centered corporate managers, strikebreaking black migrants from the South, corrupt white politicians, inflammatory news reporters, and biased and lax police officials, the smoldering fires of antagonism between blacks and whites exploded into furious rioting in July 1917. When the smoke from burning boxcars and houses lifted, nine whites and about forty blacks were dead, many of them the victims of unspeakable horror. A white reporter counted six black corpses lying near the corner of Fourth and Broadway. "I think every one I saw killed had both hands above his head begging for mercy." He had heard one moan, "My God, don't kill me, white man." Whites put torches to the homes of black people, leaving them with the choice of burning alive or fleeing to risk death by gunfire. Black women and children died along with their men; clubbed, shot, and stabbed, wounded and dying blacks lay in the streets. Others were lynched, including some who were already practically dead from other injuries. One black man had suffered severe head wounds; but, as he was not dead yet, the mob decided to hang him. "To put the rope around the negro's neck," noted a reporter, "one of the lynchers stuck his fingers inside the gaping scalp and lifted the negro's head by it, literally bathing his hand in the man's blood." Whites did not allow their black victims "to die easily"; when "flies settled on their terrible wounds the dying blacks [were warned not] to brush them off." Law enforcement was worse than nonexistent. Many police and militiamen, rather than try to quell the violence, worked in collusion with the white mobs in their quest to "get a nigger." State

¹¹ Finley Peter Dunne, "The Negro Problem," in *Mr. Dooley's Philosophy* (N.Y.: R. H. Russell, 1902), 217-22.

troops fraternized and joked with lawbreaking whites, and many were seen helping in the murders and arson.¹²

Disgust and anger stirred many people in the nation after East St. Louis, though some whites in the Deep South praised the riot as just one more example of the "dauntless spirit of the white man" who would not bow before a "congenitally inferior race." Some blacks, on the other hand, called for revenge and retaliatory violence; and disconsolate words marked the conversations of black people regarding their future in America. Some asked how white America, in good conscience, could tolerate the enormous gulf between its professed ideals and the reality of race relations in its native land. Such was the import of a cartoon in the *New York Evening Mail* showing a black woman kneeling before President Woodrow Wilson, pleading for mercy. Huddling next to the woman were her two young children. In the background, East St. Louis was on fire. Wilson held a document asserting that "The World Must be Made Safe for Democracy." The simple entreaty of the black woman was, "Mr. President, Why Not Make America Safe for Democracy?"¹³

The factors that had caused East St. Louis to explode were evident in varying degrees in other American cities in 1919, two years later.¹⁴ It seemed, in fact, that the atmosphere during the first year of peace after World War I was even more

¹² See the excellent study by Elliott M. Rudwick, *Race Riot at East St. Louis, July 2, 1917* (Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1964), 41-57; Martha Gruening, "The White Hand in Illinois," in NAACP-2; Oscar Leonard, "The East St. Louis Pogrom," *Survey*, XXXVIII (July 14, 1917), 331-33; U. S. House of Representatives, 65th Cong., 2nd Sess., *Report of the Special Committee Authorized by Congress to Investigate the East St. Louis Riots* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1918); State of Illinois, Council of Defense, Committee on Labor, *The Race Riots at East St. Louis* (Chicago: n.pub., 1917); Chicago Commission, *Negro in Chicago*, 71-78.

¹³ Rudwick, *East St. Louis*, 58-71. Although it was by far the most spectacular, East St. Louis was not the only wartime riot; there were others, for example, in Philadelphia and Chester, Pennsylvania, and Houston, Texas.

¹⁴ For a more detailed statement regarding causes of race riots, see Chapter VIII.

conducive to racial violence than that during the war itself. When black intellectual and civil rights leader James Weldon Johnson spoke of "the Red Summer," he was talking about the race riots that bloodied the streets of twenty-five towns and cities in the six-month period from April to early October 1919. One of these riots was a massacre, with an undetermined number of people slaughtered in rural Arkansas, and it is impossible to know exactly how many died in race riots that summer. But the number of blacks and whites killed must exceed 120.¹⁵

The Red Summer was obviously consistent with the nation's history of racial violence. Yet the accentuated climate of violence in 1919 helps to account for the exorbitant number of race riots that year. It is not coincidental that the summer of 1919 also marked the beginning of the xenophobic and hysterically antiradical "Red Scare." Both phenomena were the ugly offspring of some of the same unrest, anxieties, and dislocations that plagued the United States and, indeed, most of the world in the immediate postwar years. Mankind's values, attitudes, and expectations were in disarray in 1919, and the resultant violence was worldwide.

In Europe, for example, the new states that had emerged from the dismantled Hapsburg Empire or had seceded from Russia clashed in the various regions of mixed nationality to

¹⁵ U. S. House of Representatives, 66th Cong., 2nd Sess., Committee on the Judiciary, *Hearings on H.J. Res. 75; H.R. 259, 4123, 11873* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1920), 58; hereafter cited as *Antilynching Hearings*; James Weldon Johnson, *Along This Way* (N.Y.: Viking Press, 1935), 341; *New York Times*, October 5, 1919. The estimates of people killed in the Elaine, Arkansas, riots in October range from a dozen to several hundred. The Army claimed that one soldier, four whites, and fourteen blacks were killed: Major Eugene E. Barton to Acting Intelligence Officer, Chicago, October 9, 1919, in Justice Department Papers, National Archives. In NAACP-2, however, there is a statement by George Washington Davis, a black man from Pine City, Arkansas, who claimed that 103 black Masons had died, and that he, as acting grand secretary, had paid their death benefits; in addition, he said, seventy-three blacks who were not Masons died along with "fully 250 white men."

which two or more laid claim. The Poles waged pitched battles with the Lithuanians over the Jewish city of Vilna and with the Czechs over the Teschen district; while Hungary clashed with Austria over Burgenland and with Rumania over Transylvania. Yugoslavia and Italy contended for Fiume; Rumania and Czechoslovakia vied for Bukovina; and Italy and Turkey wanted part of Anatolia. Greece and Turkey and Ireland and England vented their ancient hatred for each other. Nationalists in India and Egypt rebelled against British rule. In addition to these and other disputes, there was the Great Civil War, with the Bolshevik Red Army struggling to reconquer the territories that had proclaimed their independence from Russia, and with Allied armies intervening to contain Bolshevism. Despite these efforts, revolution swept briefly into Germany and Hungary in 1919. In January, the Spartacists in Germany sought to duplicate the events of 1917 in Russia. Although the Spartacists failed in Germany, Communists in Hungary established a short-lived government in March. But the Bolshevik undertaking which provoked widespread anxiety in the United States was the formation in March of the Third International, or Comintern. The Comintern's manifesto urged the workers to arm and seize governmental power. People in the United States looked around suspiciously. Even the most innocuous events began to suggest class revolution.

The world unrest was not confined to territorial disputes or the specter of revolutionary communism. Indeed, Hannah Arendt has written, the "magnitude of the violence let loose in the First World War," certainly one of the bloodiest conflicts in history, might "have been enough to cause revolutions in its aftermath even without any revolutionary tradition and even if no revolution had ever occurred before."¹⁶ Much of the distress was economic. The war had disjoined the pre-

¹⁶ Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (N.Y.: Viking Press, 1963), 9; as quoted in Arthur I. Waskow, *From Race Riot to Sit-In* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books of Doubleday, 1967), 1.

war economy in which industrial Western Europe had prospered by trading with Eastern Europe and overseas nations. The value of many currencies in 1919 was uncertain, and several nations faced bankruptcy. In addition, demobilization had dumped millions of soldiers and war workers on the labor market. Unemployment was widespread, and the unemployed were hungry and restless. General strikes paralyzed Winnipeg and Havana, while riots and hunger strikes broke out in Spain, Germany, and Italy. "Bread and Peace" was the strikers' angry protest slogan.

A final manifestation of the acute disorder that plagued the world in 1919 was racial violence. Riots between black and white workers disrupted Johannesburg, South Africa; and in London and Liverpool, in Cardiff and Barry, Wales, demobilized soldiers bitterly assaulted blacks imported from Jamaica during the war.

The United States' isolation from this unrest did not immunize it against similar domestic disorders. Indeed, in one field of violence, race riots and lynchings, America set the pattern. In the United States, as elsewhere in the world, 1919 was a year of transition. The Germans had been vanquished, yet the immediate fruits of victory disappointed those Americans who were unwilling to relinquish the moral idealism that the war had exuded, or whose desire for unified national purpose had gone unfulfilled. The nation was in transit between the passions of war and "normalcy"; in the meantime, it was also a battlefield for domestic conflict.¹⁷

The nation had faced a common foe in April 1917, and Americans of diverse national origins, races, economic strata, and religions had united to defeat it. They did so not only by answering the appeal for troops, but also by flocking to factories to turn out the tools of war, purchasing Liberty Bonds,

¹⁷ See H. O. Dahlke, "Race and Minority Riots—A Study in the Typology of Violence," *Social Forces*, XXX (May 1952), 419-25; John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (N.Y.: Atheneum edition, 1963), 222-24, 255.

adhering to meatless days and breadless meals, and contributing services and funds to the YMCA and Red Cross. The singular purpose of these enterprises established intense national unity. Such unity demanded an unquestioning loyalty, intolerant of nonconforming ideas and behavior or even of suspected nonconformity. Yet in a significant way the wartime cohesion also served to restrain aggression. Heterogeneous elements of the population had united, and involvement in the war effort accorded to even the lowest strata of society a degree of status. With the Armistice, however, this national unity dissolved, and with it the restraint emanating from common purpose. But the wartime zeal survived, and social schisms proliferated. One offspring of this environment was the Red Scare.¹⁸

The Red Scare was an extension of the atmosphere of the war, with its cult of patriotism, its generalized climate of violence, and its need of an enemy. In fact, the anti-German and antiradical agitation of late 1918 and the early months of 1919 so overlapped that, as John Higham has noted, "no date marks the end of one or the beginning of the other."¹⁹ Yet, by midyear, the emotional opposition to the external threat had blurred into indiscriminate hatred of the "inner enemy," aliens and dissenters. So widespread had become this inability to discriminate that *The Fleet Review* could

¹⁸ Georg Simmel has observed: "... groups in any sort of war situation are not tolerant. They cannot afford individual deviations from the unity of the coordinating principle beyond a definitely limited degree": *Conflict and The Web of Group-Affiliations* (Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, 1955), 93. See also Lewis A. Coser, *The Functions of Social Conflict* (Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, 1956), 33-38, 85-97; Allen D. Grimshaw, "A Study of Social Violence: Urban Race Riots in the United States" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1959), 48-49.

¹⁹ Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 223. Sociologists and social psychologists have also noted that "it is not farfetched to suggest that an entire political entity may become a culture of violence when engaging in war": Marvin E. Wolfgang, "A Preface to Violence," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (hereafter, simply *Annals*), CCCLXIV (March 1966), 5-6.

ask: "Wonder if Berlin Bill is raising a scrubby beard so as to join the Bolsheviki? He'd doubtless feel at home with his friends Trotsky and Lenin." ²⁰

Although subversion and sabotage did crop up spectacularly in 1919, such as the springtime bombings of government officials' residences, critics of the radicals ascribed every sort of disorder to them, including the social and industrial unrest that trailed in the wake of the federal government's amorphous demobilization program. "The moment we knew the armistice to have been signed," President Wilson told Congress in December 1918, "we took the harness off." ²¹ With few controls and little planning, armies dispersed, wartime regulations expired, and industries either shut down or underwent the task of retooling for peacetime consumption. By July, while government agencies had abruptly terminated war contracts, the army had issued 2,600,000 discharges, at the rate of 15,000 per day. ²² Veterans thus glutted the labor market in the very months of decreasing employment.

Unemployment rose sharply in April and May, and with it the nation's industrial unrest. As a consequence, the United States suffered one of its worst years of labor strife since the 1890's. As the 181 strikes and lockouts in March soared to 262 in April and 413 in May, employers and politicians, some of them genuinely frightened, others perceiving advantage in allegations of radicalism, blamed these disruptions on radicals and traitors. ²³ Probably more than any other labor dispute of that year, the Seattle general strike of February reinforced the dread of a workers' revolution. Although con-

²⁰ *The Fleet Review*, X (July 1919), 17.

²¹ R. S. Baker and W. E. Dodd (eds.), *War and Peace: Presidential Messages, Addresses, and Public Papers (1917-1924)* by Woodrow Wilson (N.Y.: Harper, 1927), I, 313; Frederic L. Paxson, *The Great Demobilization and Other Essays* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1941), 7.

²² *Chicago Daily News*, July 3, 5, 1919.

²³ Edson L. Whitney (comp.), "Strikes and Lockouts in the United States, 1916, 1917, 1918, and 1919," *Monthly Labor Review*, X (June 1920), 200.

ducted by craft unionists who were hardly revolutionaries, the strike helped to transform the anxiety of countless people into panic. It was not a labor dispute at all, claimed Seattle's Mayor Ole Hanson. It was an attempt by revolutionaries "to establish a Soviet Government and control and operate all enterprises and industries." Hanson and other publicists of the threat of radicalism also asserted that alien agitators were the masterminds behind the strike, thus linking the fear of revolution to the distrust and hatred of the foreign-born and accentuating the apprehension that immigrant laborers were inherently dangerous to internal security. ²⁴

Politicians and industrialists were not alone in embracing the emotionalism of antiradicalism and xenophobia. Overzealous soldiers, sailors, and Marines continued to act according to the militant aims that had guided them during the war. The fear of a proletarian uprising evoked responses similar to those elicited earlier by the "Huns." When radical union members circumvented a red flag ordinance by sporting red neckties at a rally protesting the conviction of Tom Mooney, a fellow unionist sentenced to death for murder, the organ of the enlisted men of the Navy declared resolutely: "If regulated authority fails in its mission to suppress the 'Reds,' there is some hope in the prospect that there will be enough of the Navy and Marine Corps and Army in the vicinity of these revolutionary meetings to deal properly with the enemies of the country." ²⁵ On May Day, soldiers invaded the Russian People's House in New York City, confiscated radical literature, and forced the aliens there to sing the "Star Spangled Banner." Later that day, more soldiers and sailors stormed the offices of the *New York Call*, a Socialist newspaper, assaulting several May Day celebrants. Vigilante war veterans also disrupted demonstrations in Boston and Cleveland, and

²⁴ See Robert K. Murray, *The Red Scare: A Study in National Hysteria, 1919-1920* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1955), 3-17, 58-66.

²⁵ "The Navy and the 'Reds,'" *The Fleet Review*, X (January 1919), 21.

in each of these cities one person was mortally wounded.

By midyear, the balmy spring of 1919 had become a torrid summer, and the antiradical and xenophobic mania had clearly risen with the heat. In the hands of employers, politicians, and much of the press, the epithet "Bolshevism" had become an increasingly effective instrument for damning all sorts of opposition and contrary beliefs; Communism was a phantom that conjured up a myriad of demonic images, and these images inspired a host of aggressive impulses.²⁶ By mid-year, moreover, government at all levels had succumbed to this emotional tide. Several states had enacted red flag, criminal anarchy, syndicalist, and sedition laws; and the federal police powers, led by Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer, were mounting the onslaught that would yield the grossest indignities of the Red Scare.

The Red Scare was functioning without reserve by late summer and early autumn. A visitor to the United States at that time, A. G. Gardiner, editor of *The London Daily News*, was dismayed by the irrationality he witnessed. He could not forget, he wrote a half-dozen years later, "the feverish condition of the public mind at that time. It was hag-ridden by the spectre of Bolshevism. It was like a sleeper in a nightmare, enveloped by a thousand phantoms of destruction. Property was in an agony of fear"; and dissent, and indeed most any kind of nonconformity, was in danger of being denounced as "radical." "'Radical' covered the most innocent departure from conventional thought with a suspicion of desperate purpose. 'America,' as a wit of the time said, 'is the land of liberty—liberty to keep in step.'"²⁷

The structure of society in 1919 was thus as conducive to the Red Scare as to the Red Summer. Bolstered by the force

²⁶ To obtain some appreciation of the temper of this hysteria, see Edmund Vance Cook's poem "Bolshevik" in *Public*, XXII (July 19, 1919), 772.

²⁷ Gardiner, *Portraits and Portents* (N.Y.: Harper, 1926), 13; quoted in Murray, *Red Scare*, 17.

of law and the nation's mores, the "search for the 'inner enemy,'" as the sociologist Georg Simmel observed, "became institutionalized after World War I; and then instead of being disapproved by members of one's group for being prejudiced, one was punished for not being prejudiced." Although the motives for and the manifestations of race prejudice in 1919 were somewhat different, this statement was as true of race relations as it was of antiradicalism and the treatment of the foreign-born. For the most highly susceptible objects of prejudice in postwar America were its black men and women, not because they were radicals, but because they threatened the accommodative race system of white superordination and black subordination. The white populace had long been inimical to the strivings of black people, and during World War I this hostility became markedly more intense as over 450,000 Southern blacks migrated to the North. There, in crowded cities, they met in bitter competition with whites over jobs, housing, political power, and facilities for education, transportation, and relaxation. Moreover, black people, visibly distinct and with behavior patterns ostensibly alien to whites, were convenient scapegoats, especially for whites who feared that their social status had dropped because of the influx of blacks from the South. The employment of a new black worker in a shop or the arrival of a black family on a block only heightened anxieties of status deprivation, often prompting whites to revive the ancient shibboleth that blacks were grasping, not for material improvement, but for "social equality." White hostility to individual black people became generalized into a categorical hatred of an entire race.

For their part, black men and women, North and South, entered 1919 with aspirations for a larger share of both the nation's democracy and its wealth. Tension mounted as these aspirations collided with a general white determination to reaffirm the black people's prewar status on the bottom rung of the nation's racial and economic ladder. In 1919 racial uneasiness was evident in cities and towns throughout the coun-

try.²⁸ And there seemed to be a threshold of tension above which racial violence was almost bound to occur, if spurred by a precipitating incident and in the absence of external controls of law enforcement. These various factors coalesced time and time again in 1919, to provoke an unparalleled outburst of racial violence.²⁹

Lynch mobs murdered seventy-eight black people in 1919, an increase of fifteen over 1918 and thirty over 1917. Ten of the victims were war veterans, several of them still in uniform. Throughout the South the hangings, shootings, and burnings multiplied in frequency and brutality as summer followed spring. March and April each saw four outrages, while nine blacks were lynched in May and nine more in June. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People had expressed shock in 1918 when lynch mobs had murdered two black men by fire; in 1919, eleven men were burned alive at the stake.³⁰

Perhaps the most monstrous lynching of the summer oc-

²⁸ Leonard Berkowitz, *Aggression: A Social Psychological Analysis* (N.Y.: McGraw-Hill, 1962), 136-64, 184-85; Grimshaw, "Study of Social Violence," 180-83; Dahlke, "Race and Minority Riots," 419-25; Grimshaw, "Lawlessness and Violence in America and Their Special Manifestations in Changing Negro-White Relationships," *Journal of Negro History*, XLIV (January 1959), 52 ff.; Grimshaw, "Urban Racial Violence in the United States: Changing Ecological Considerations," *American Journal of Sociology*, LXVI (September 1960), 107, 118-19; Grimshaw, "Negro-White Relations in the Urban North: Two Areas of High Conflict Potential," *Journal of Intergroup Relations*, III (Spring 1962), 146-58.

²⁹ Neil J. Smelser, *Theory of Collective Behavior* (N.Y.: Free Press, 1962), 3, 6, 8-9, 12-21, 101-9, 222-69; Stanley Lieberman and Arnold R. Silverman, "The Precipitants and Underlying Conditions of Race Riots," *American Sociological Review*, XXX (December 1965), 887-98.

³⁰ NAACP, *Thirty Years of Lynching in the United States, 1889-1918* (N.Y.: NAACP, 1919), *passim*; U. S. House of Representatives, 66th Cong., 2nd Sess., *Antilynching Bill*, Report No. 1027 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1920), 9-17; "For July Crisis," June 20, 1919, in NAACP Papers (NAACP-1), Library of Congress (F-1); *Chicago Daily Journal*, July 5, 1919; Herbert J. Seligmann, "Protecting Southern Womanhood," *Nation*, CVIII (June 14, 1919), 938-39; *Antilynching Hearings*, 52-60; NAACP, *Tenth Annual Report* (N.Y.: NAACP, 1920), 14-15, 18-20, 21-25.

curred in Mississippi in late June. The day before the lynching, a mob had severely wounded an accused black rapist, John Hartfield, in the canebrakes near Ellisville. Fearing that Hartfield might expire before the hanging and burning scheduled for the next day at "the big gum tree," a doctor prolonged his life. In the meantime, newspapers in Jackson and New Orleans advertised the forthcoming event. "3,000 WILL BURN NEGRO," proclaimed the *New Orleans States* in bold red type across the top of the front page. Thousands of curiosity seekers flocked to Ellisville, and Mississippi's Governor Theodore G. Bilbo gave the lynching his official sanction. When asked if he planned to prevent it, Bilbo replied: "I am utterly powerless. The State has no troops, and if the civil authorities at Ellisville are helpless, the State is equally so." Moreover, he added, "excitement is at such a high pitch throughout South Mississippi that any attempt to interfere with the mob would doubtless result in the death of hundreds of persons. The negro has confessed, says he is ready to die, and nobody can keep the inevitable from happening." White Mississippians evidently disagreed only about the method of executing Hartfield. The *New Orleans States* reported that "some of the angry citizens . . . wanted Hartfield lynched, while others wanted him burned." He was both hanged and burned, and also shot.³¹

While the lynchings of the Red Summer were usually confined to the South, practically half of the epidemic of race riots burst forth in Northern and border states. Several proposed hangings, moreover, soon developed into riots when blacks retaliated.³²

Charleston, South Carolina, suffered the first of the major

³¹ *Antilynching Hearings*, 47; *New York Times*, June 27, 1919; *Chicago Defender*, July 5, 1919; NAACP, *Tenth Annual Report*, 21, 24. In the 1920's, Ho Chi Minh also wrote about the Hartfield and other lynchings in the United States; see his *Selected Works* (Hanoi: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1960), I, 99-105, 127-32.

³² For example, read about the riot in Millen, Georgia, in *Antilynching Hearings*, 58; *New York Times*, April 15, 1919; *Chicago Defender*, April 19, 1919; *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, April 15, 1919.

riots of the Red Summer. It was Saturday night, May 10, when the black man doubled up in pain and slumped to the street. There had been an argument, and the bullet wound inflicted by a white sailor had been fatal. Hundreds of other sailors were also on liberty that night; hearing rumors of a racial altercation involving a Navy man, they began to swarm angrily into the city's black district. Augustus Bonaparte was having his hair cut at the time. Looking out the barbershop window, he saw a mob of sailors dash into the nearby shooting gallery, which they proceeded to loot for rifles. Automobiles filled with sailors, many of them armed with rifles, clubs, and hammers, soon crowded the streets. "Get a nigger," was their cry. James Frayer, a black cobbler, saw frightened black men and boys running toward his shop, shouting that the sailors were coming. Quickly, Frayer shut his door and latched it. He hid behind the counter with three customers. "Open the door," yelled a voice. When nobody moved, the sailor outside fired his weapon at random through the door, wounding Frayer's apprentice in the lower part of his back. Unable to subdue the rioters, the city police asked for help from Navy officials, who promptly ordered sailors to return to ship and dispatched Marines with fixed bayonets to occupy the streets. Although the presence of Marines aided in restoring calm, certain of the troops continued the terror that the sailors had begun. T. B. Nelson, for example, darted from his house upon hearing moaning in the street. Lying there wounded was a black youth, who pleaded with the Marines who hovered over him. "What are you shooting me for? I was not doing anything." "Why didn't you halt when we told you to?" demanded one of the troops. The boy gasped that he had not been ordered to stop. "Hush your mouth or we'll give you some more." When Isaac Moses also told Marines that he had not heard their command to halt, they responded by calling him a "damned liar," knocking him in the head with a gun butt, stealing five dollars, and stabbing him through the left leg with a bayonet. The death toll from that night of rioting in

Charleston was two black men. Wounded were seventeen blacks, seven sailors, and a white policeman.³³

Longview, the center of population of Gregg County, an east Texas county of 8,500 whites and 8,200 blacks, had been uneasy with racial tension during the spring and summer months of 1919. Members of the local chapter of the Negro Business League had established black cooperative stores that sold products at lower prices than the white merchants. Black leaders—men such as Dr. C. P. Davis, a physician, and S. L. Jones, a high school teacher—had urged black farmers to avoid the white cotton brokers in Longview by selling direct to the buyers in Galveston. On June 16, Lemuel Walters was discovered in a white woman's bedroom. The next day his nude body was found lying near the railroad tracks at a desolate spot known as Foote's Switch, four miles south of Longview. Fear and apprehension swept the black community, and a delegation of eleven men led by Davis and Jones made a call on the county judge, Erskine H. Bramlette. The judge advised silence, saying that "there [should] be no talking as talking would interfere with locating the culprits." Days passed, but no arrests were made, and it appeared to the men of the Negro Business League that law officials not only were not investigating the lynching but that they were even using this time to destroy evidence which would prove the guilt of the perpetrators of the crime. The black men returned to Judge Bramlette, who told them that he had informed the district attorney of their suspicions. Again the judge advised "no talking."³⁴

³³ Affidavits by witnesses and victims of the riot, in NAACP-2; and, in *ibid.*, clippings from *Charleston News and Courier*, May 11, 12, 16, 1919; *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, May 12, 1919; *Cleveland Advocate*, May 17, 1919; *Chicago Defender*, May 17, 1919; Waskow, *From Race Riot to Sit-In*, 12-16, 210.

³⁴ Most of the Longview information is from "Confidential" interview with S. L. Jones and C. P. Davis, Chicago, August 18, 1919, in Arthur B. Spingarn Papers, Library of Congress; and from newspapers. See "The Riot at Longview, Texas," *Crisis*, XVIII (October, 1919), 297-98; *Dallas Morning News*, July 12-15, 1919; *San Antonio Express*,

A Saturday morning event in Longview's black district, as in black sections in towns across the South, was the arrival on the train of the weekly *Chicago Defender*. That July 5 issue of the newspaper was of special interest, for it had a story about Longview. Lemuel Walters, read the article on page two, "was taken from the Longview jail by a crowd of white men when a prominent white woman declared she loved him, and if she were in the North would obtain a divorce and marry him." His only offense, the *Defender* added, was having had a white woman love him, and the penalty he had paid was death. No formal charges had been preferred against Walters, and the sheriff had "gladly welcomed the mob" that had dragged the black man from jail and "shot [him] to pieces."

Jones, who was also the local *Defender* agent, drove his automobile to the downtown business district the following Thursday, July 10. But when he returned to his car, he encountered three white men who brusquely demanded that he come with them. Jones refused and tried to pull away from one of the men who had seized him. Another of the men pulled a wrench out of his coat and struck Jones a heavy blow on the head. Other blows followed. Jones fell to the pavement, struggled to get up, but fell again. He had written the *Defender* article, his attackers charged, and it would be much easier if he simply admitted it. When Jones denied that he had, they beat him again. Finally, the pummeling stopped, and Jones dragged himself to Dr. Davis' office. Later, at home, Jones asked that J. J. Ross, secretary of the Chamber of Commerce, be brought to him. He told Ross what he had

July 12-17, 1919; *New York Times*, July 12, 14, 1919; *Topeka Plaindealer*, July 25, 1919; *Chicago Herald-Examiner*, July 12, 14, 23, 1919; *Chicago Defender*, July 5, 1919; *Kansas City Advocate*, July 25, 1919; Waskow, *From Race Riot to Sit-In*, 16-20, 180, 193, 209, 212; in NAACP-1, W. E. B. Du Bois to George A. Towns, July 18, 1919 (C-3); and in NAACP-2, P. A. Williams to J. R. Shilladay, August 11, 1919; Williams to Mary White Ovington, August 16, 1919; and newspaper clippings from *Shreveport Times*, July 12-13, 15, 17, 23, 27, 1919.

told his assailants—that he was not the author of the article; and if Ross did not believe him, Jones said, he should wire the *Defender* for confirmation. Ross said he would.

Meanwhile, there was talk in town of impending "trouble that night." If Jones were still in Longview by midnight, according to one rumor, he would be lynched. Mayor G. A. Bodenheim sent a messenger to Davis to warn him and Jones to leave town at once. But Davis sent word back that he was staying. Davis also learned that the mayor and other city officials were meeting in emergency session at city hall, and he decided to join them. When he arrived at city hall, however, all that the white authorities would tell him was to take off his hat. "Yes!" Davis replied heatedly. "That's all you all say to a colored man who comes to talk serious business to you: 'Take off your hat.' I am not going to do it. I want to know what protection we colored citizens are going to have tonight." "You will have to take your chances," the mayor replied.

As darkness settled on Longview, black volunteers met at Davis' house, "pledging their lives in his defense." The doctor assumed command of the men, posting them "where they could safeguard every side from which an attack could be made," and instructing them not to fire before he did and "under no circumstances to shoot into white people's houses." At about 11:00, Dr. Davis sneaked through alleys and dark streets to within eyeshot of the city hall. It was just as he had feared. There he saw armed men gathering, using the fire department as their command post. Returning to Jones' house, he told his troops what the prospects were, and "offered to allow any of them who did not feel like risking his life . . . to retire. . . . Every man stayed and said he was prepared to take what might come." "Soon afterward and approaching midnight," Davis and Jones recalled, "the mob came down through a back street." The black men crouched quietly, waiting in ambush until Jones' house was "approached or attacked. Four white men came on the back

porch of the house and called to Jones to come out." There was no answer. "When it became evident that they intended to force their way in, Davis fired the first shot and the melee began." Between 100 and 150 shots were fired in a half hour, and four whites fell with fatal wounds. The rest of the mob of about a dozen whites retreated to the town square. Minutes later, and one at a time, automobiles sped down the street leading to Jones' house, white men hopped out, picked up the dead and wounded, and sped away.

Throughout the night, a fire bell was sounded, eventually summoning about 1,000 white men to the town square. The mayor, Judge Bramlette, and other town leaders also arrived, however, to make speeches urging the men to disperse and go home. Until almost daybreak the leaderless crowd simply milled around. Then, as if suddenly energized by the first shafts of daylight, men began smashing their way into the hardware store and helping themselves to rifles, pistols, and ammunition. Thus armed, a mob headed back to Jones' house. But by then Jones and Davis were in hiding, so the mob occupied itself by dousing their homes with kerosene and igniting them, along with the homes of four other of the "principal" black residents. The next day, police officers, aided by bloodhounds, tracked down Marion Bush, the 60-year-old father-in-law of Davis, and shot him dead in a corn field three miles south of town.

Davis and Jones succeeded in escaping from Longview. Dressed in a soldier's uniform and improvised leggings, Davis boarded a train a few miles from town. Knowing that authorities searching for him would be looking for a doctor, he "bought some popcorn, some red pop and some other refreshment and walked around . . . throwing the bottle in the air, drinking from it ostentatiously and eating and singing, like a simple 'darky.'" He also talked a white boy into shooting craps with him, and after making a special effort to lose fifteen cents, he muttered, "That cleans me. I ain't done got no more money. . . ." Fearing worse violence, the gov-

ernor of Texas declared martial law in Longview and ordered the state militia and Texas Rangers into the town. Yet there was no more bloodshed. Certain white citizens of the community even adopted a resolution deploring the vigilante actions of the white mob, after also deploring the "scurrilous [*Defender*] article" about "a respectable white lady." That day and night of rioting, however, had left five dead, a score wounded, and many homeless.

After Charleston and Longview, the third major riot of the Red Summer erupted in Washington, D.C., a city where lurid tales of black rapists had been rampant for weeks.³⁵ In June and July, four women allegedly were assaulted in Washington, and three in the portion of Maryland contiguous to the District of Columbia. The press featured emotional accounts of these attacks, imputing them all, without substantive evidence, to blacks. One alleged victim claimed that she had been sexually assaulted by "two young negroes . . . wearing white shirts, no coats, tan or yellow hats." Two weeks later she admitted that she had not been attacked by black youths, or indeed attacked at all. But the denial received miniscule coverage compared to the initial accusation. Such inflammatory journalism aroused the ire of whites, especially of military personnel stationed in or near the Capital, and racial tension mounted. On Saturday, July 19, the *Washington Post* ran headlines telling of another sexual assault: "NEGROES ATTACK GIRL . . . WHITE MEN VAINLY PURSUE." The next night Washington exploded. Racial tempers flared after a minor dispute on Pennsylvania Avenue in the midst of the capital city. Roaming bands of soldiers, sailors, and Ma-

³⁵ The most extensive account is in Waskow, *From Race Riot to Sit-In*, 21-37; but see also *Washington Bee*, July 19, 1919; *Washington Post*, July 19-24, August 5, 1919; *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 7, 22, 1919; William G. Haan to Brigadier General C. R. Boardman, August 5, 1919, Haan Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin; "Racial Tension and Race Riot," *Outlook*, CXXII (August 6, 1919), 533; Constance McLaughlin Green, *The Secret City: A History of Race Relations in the Nation's Capital* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), 190-97.

rines began to molest any black person in sight, hauling them off streetcars and out of restaurants, chasing them up alleys, and beating them mercilessly on street corners. With ineffectual police restraint, violence reigned for three days as white mobs ran amuck through the streets. Blacks retaliated on the fourth day when the whites threatened to burn their homes.

During the riot, further irresponsible journalism, by both the white and the black press, heightened the anger of the mobs. On the first day of bloodshed, for example, the *Bee*, a black newspaper, declared: "A RIOT IS ALMOST CREATED: A Texan in the War Risk Bureau Assaults a Colored Female." The article beneath the headline told that the "assault" was actually a verbal insult. Two days later the *Washington Post* notified the aroused armed servicemen of a "Mobilization for Tonight." "It was learned," the *Post* noted, "that a mobilization of every available service man . . . has been ordered for tomorrow evening near the Knights of Columbus hut. . . . The hour of assembly is 9 o'clock and the purpose is a 'clean-up' that will cause the events of the last two evenings to pale into insignificance." Thus the *Post* had not only inflamed the passions of the rioters, it had even furnished them with a battle plan.

The helplessness of the Washington police compelled Secretary of War Newton D. Baker to order in 2,000 regular Army soldiers. On the evening of July 22, with federal troops and a downpour of rain deterring would-be rioters, the violence finally subsided, having left six dead in the streets and upwards of 100 injured.

After the bloodshed in Washington, the *New York Times* consoled itself by noting that, "painful as it is to say," a race riot such as the one in the Capital "could not have arisen in any Northern city where the police had been trained to expect riot duty."³⁶ The *Times* displayed little prescience on this occasion, however. For in a Northern city, just four days later, John Harris and his four young black friends hopped onto the

³⁶ *New York Times*, July 23, 1919.

back of a produce truck, dreaming about the Lake Michigan beach at the foot of Chicago's 26th Street, and about their homemade raft and all the excitement that awaited them in the water.