

WRIGHT ANGLES by THOMAS H. WRIGHT

EDITORS NOTE: This is the last of the columns written by Mr. Wright before his untimely death two weeks ago.

The ghetto is being cleared out in the field of literature, according to Dr. Alain Locke. His annual article reviewing the literature created by Negroes during 1951 has appeared in the first quarter publication of Phylon, Atlanta University's Quarterly Review of Race and Culture. Dr. Locke titles this year's paper, "The High Price of Integration." His article demonstrates how rapidly our double entry bookkeeping in literary creativity is disappearing. "For the Negro author is moving ever more and more into the field of general authorship, while at the same time, the white author is moving ever more boldly and competently into the delineation of Negro life." — "The high cost of prejudice, to which we all but became accommodated, is now being compounded by the high price of integration." Thus, speaks a great philosopher and man of letters.

The development of the potential of integration in the area of "living space" or "the community" is the most important change now coming into human relations. In almost every major north industrial center of the United States — the walls of the Negro ghetto are coming down. The experience in Chicago is a dramatic demonstration of what has been happening. We could easily dismiss the spreading out of population with a cynical comment — "Necessity brings it—the old ghetto simply couldn't hold the additional people" or "real estate guys have found a profitable market for old buildings and they are selling them to Negroes while the selling is good." If this were the total answer, we would miss the tremendous potential now open to us for the first time in thirty years to develop the integrated, interracial community in neighborhood after neighborhood in our great metropolitan centers. According to the 1950 Census Report, the number of census tracts in Chicago in which one may find some non-white residents has greatly increased. In 1940, out of 935 census tracts in Chicago, 305 showed no nonwhite residents whatsoever. In 1950 the number had decreased to 128 census tracts.

The Chicago Commission on Human Relations has estimated that from 1948-1952 some 25,000 Negro families have occupied homes through purchase or rental in areas where they have not hitherto lived. In spite of dangerous anti-racial disturbances in a number of instances, overwhelmingly these families have occupied these homes without any incident whatsoever. The great community areas of Oakland-Kenwood, Hyde Park, Woodlawn, Park Manor, North Lawndale, and increasingly other neighborhoods in Chicago are rapidly becoming interracial communities. Community-wide organizations made up of people of every race and creed are now in existence or being organized in most of these neighborhoods. These organizations are devoted to sound human relations programs, which include the elimination of all discriminatory practices in public accommodations and local employment, the opening of all community facilities on the basis of equality of use, the maintenance of occupancy standards to prevent overcrowding and community standards to prevent property and community deterioration. There is much that is yet unaccomplished. The churches, except for a few, have not dropped their segregated pattern. Most of the organizations in the community are still all white, but there is movement all across the board.

The 1950 census report on Chicago shows another trend in population and it is supported by experience during the past years.