



NATIONAL AFFAIRS

The Public Interest

The "Color Line" Today

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SUMMER 1985

IN 1903, W.E.B. Du Bois wrote that "the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line- the relation of the darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa, in America and the islands of the sea." Forty years later Gunnar Myrdal characterized the race problem in the United States as a great dilemma that, if not resolved, threatened the ultimate success of our democratic experiment. Within a decade there had begun a national effort to confront this dilemma. There ensued painful conflict, but also enlightened legislation, courageous leadership, and greater progress than many Americans thought possible (or, in some cases, desirable). In 1903, W.E.B. Du Bois wrote that "the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line- the relation of the darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa, in America and the

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