

JUNE • 1909

From Robert Elijah Jones¹

New Orleans June the third, Nineteen hundred-nine

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

Dear Doctor: I have your letter, under date of May the seventeenth, and must apologize for the delay in replying.

To answer your query concerning Mr. Walter L. Cohen, of this city, and at the same time recognize all the principles of justice involved, I must go somewhat into details, and hence the length of this letter.

I know nothing against Mr. Cohen's life and personal habits, except that he drinks and gambles and plays baseball on Sunday. I do not think that he denies this or attempts to conceal it. I do not know that we can say Mr. Cohen is allied with the forces that make for righteousness and moral uplift. While I do not mean to infer that his leadership is negative in this regard, it certainly is not positive. There are persons in this City who follow Mr. Cohen's political leadership, who feel at heart that a man who represents more in his ideals for the race would be more satisfactory as a leader. In talking with the Managing Editor of the Times-Democrat one night, we Colored people were upbraided for keeping Cohen to the front. Now this statement, of course, must be taken with a degree of allowance. This Editor may or may not have had reason for saying what he did concerning Mr. Cohen, and it is likely enough that any colored man who is as active, politically, as Mr. Cohen is, would be objected to by a certain set of whites.

Now, my personal attitude toward Mr. Cohen is this: I greatly admire, along with others, his courage and force as a political leader. I believe the organization which he represents as its leader deserves to live because it is righteous. Of course, I am opposed to Lilly-Whitism. I am, therefore, in favor of the Republicanism for which Mr. Cohen stands, and he is beyond doubt the leader, and is recognized by the City and State Press and the public in general as the leader of the faction known as the Black and Tans. In this capacity Mr. Cohen has had whatever support I could give him, and I have supported him openly, and without any apology, whatever. He is shrewd and capable. In his official position, as Registrar of the Land Office, I have heard no criticism, whatever, of his ad-