

Postscript

by W. E. B. DuBois

SEGREGATION

The thinking colored people of the United States must stop being stampeded by the word segregation. The opposition to racial segregation is not or should not be any distaste or unwillingness of colored people to work with each other, to cooperate with each other, to live with each other. The opposition to segregation is an opposition to discrimination. The experience in the United States has been that usually when there is racial segregation, there is also racial discrimination.

But the two things do not necessarily go together, and there should never be an opposition to segregation pure and simple unless that segregation does involve discrimination. Not only is there no objection to colored people living beside colored people if the surroundings and treatment involve no discrimination, if streets are well lighted, if there is water, sewerage and police protection, and if anybody of any color who wishes, can live in that neighborhood. The same way in schools, there is no objection to schools attended by colored pupils and taught by colored teachers. On the contrary, colored pupils can by our own contention be as fine human beings as any other sort of children, and we certainly know that there are no teachers better than trained colored teachers. But if the existence of such a school is made reason and cause for giving it worse housing, poorer facilities, poorer equipment and poorer teachers, then we do object, and the objection is not against the color of the pupils' or teachers' skins, but against the discrimination.

In the recent endeavor of the United States government to redistribute capital so that some of the disadvantaged groups may get a chance for development, the American Negro should voluntarily and insistently demand his share. Groups of communities and farms inhabited by colored folk should be voluntarily formed. In no case should there be any discrimination against white and blacks. But, at the same time, colored people should come forward, should organize and conduct enterprises, and their only insistence should be that the same provisions be made for the success of their enterprise that is being made for the success of any other enterprise. It must be remembered that in the last quarter of a century, the advance of the colored people has been mainly in the lines where they themselves working by and for themselves, have accomplished the greatest advance.

There is no doubt that numbers of white people, perhaps the majority of Americans, stand ready to take the most

distinct advantage of voluntary segregation and cooperation among colored people. Just as soon as they get a group of black folk segregated, they use it as a point of attack and discrimination. Our counter attack should be, therefore, against this discrimination; against the refusal of the South to spend the same amount of money on the black child as on the white child for its education; against the inability of black groups to use public capital; against the monopoly of credit by white groups. But never in the world should our fight be against association with ourselves because by that very token we give up the whole argument that we are worth associating with.

Doubtless, and in the long run, the greatest human development is going to take place under experiences of widest individual contact. Nevertheless, today such individual contact is made difficult and almost impossible by petty prejudice, deliberate and almost criminal propaganda and various survivals from prehistoric heathenism. It is impossible, therefore, to wait for the millennium of free and normal intercourse before we unite, to cooperate among themselves in groups of like-minded people and in groups of people suffering from the same disadvantages and the same hatreds.

It is the class-conscious working man uniting together who will eventually emancipate labor throughout the world. It is the race-conscious black man cooperating together in his own institutions and movements who will eventually emancipate the colored race, and the great step ahead today is for the American Negro to accomplish his economic emancipation through voluntary determined cooperative effort.

ROOSEVELT

Two or three steps by Franklin Roosevelt encourage the American Negro to hope that despite his dependence upon the bourbon and reactionary South for his political salvation, he is not going to submit altogether to the trammels of race prejudice.

First, in his treatment of Haiti, he is at least willing to talk to Haitians as men. His policy is still to make the United States government the petty agent for the collection of an unjust debt saddled on Haiti by the National City Bank. But even in this he is willing to talk the matter over and in the conversation that took place on the way to Montevideo, there seems to have been laid the basis of understanding between the two oldest republics in the new world.

Other presidents have talked about lynching, but they did it as a last resort and under tremendous outside pressure. It took war, riot and upheaval to make Wilson say one small word. Nothing ever induced Herbert Hoover to say anything on the subject worth the saying. Even Harding was virtually dumb. Roosevelt, with his great radio audience, has declared frankly that lynching is murder. We all knew it, but it is unusual to have a President of the United States admit it. These things give us hope.

ROLPH AND HITLER

The continuing problem of democracy is the choice of those persons who are to conduct the state. Into their hands great power is and must be entrusted. They are for the time being, curbed only by an undetermined and uncertain public opinion, monarchs in every sense of the word. Their rule is no different from the rule of a Caesar or a Napoleon, except that under modern democratic conditions, it is limited usually in time, somewhat by reaction of public thought. Nevertheless most of our effort has been given to methods of getting these people in office and very little has been devoted to a careful knowledge and exploration of their thoughts and character. It is commonplace for the average voter to cast his ballot for a man whose name he has never seen before, and all too often for a person concerning whose opinions he has but the slightest knowledge.

Who knew or knows Adolph Hitler? A year ago he was almost a joke; then a vague agitator; and even today it is by no means certain as to whether he is a great mind or a great advertiser. Certainly the people of California when they elected Rolph governor, could have known comparatively little about him; and yet into the hands of Rolph and Hitler is put this tremendous power: power to persecute, to threaten civilization, to overturn the public order and to do this by legal and regular methods.

All this does not discount or contradict the theory of democratic government. It simply tells us that after or even before our industry is readjusted to the normal wants of men, we have got to give attention not simply to elections, but to the character of the men who are running for office, and that we must insist upon the right to know not only from their words, but from their thoughts and deeds, just what human life and human government mean to them.

FRANCE

There are certain characteristics of the French people concerning which the public knows little and yet all the world feels the results. To those who know, there can be little doubt but that the French are the most civilized people of the Western world, and one thing among many others attests this fact: 50,000 have fled from Germany under the Nazi regime. Of these, 25,000 have taken refuge in France and have been welcomed by that marvelous French hospitality. Probably the majority of the white Russians representing the former rank and wealth of Russia, have taken refuge in France and have been welcomed. In other words, the French people have always been not only hospitable to strangers, but hospitable to ideas, and for that reason they have reached a state of cultivation which continually, despite anything that they do or wish or that the world wants, has placed them at the head of modern culture. A nation which at one breath can welcome the German Jew and the Russian aristocrat; that in the face of American money and prejudice, can hold the balance even between colored people and white, deserves much in this narrow and wrong-headed world.

SCOTTSBORO

Some one sat in our office the other day and said "why doesn't THE CRISIS say more about Scottsboro?" and I answered, "Why indeed!" There are some things so painfully obvious, that it seems almost futile to write words about them. Lynching is an unspeakable blot upon America. We are the only nation in the civilized world that burns human beings alive as a public spectacle. And yet beyond this is a national habit and custom which is far worse, and that is the using of the legal processes of law for profit and prejudice and revenge. It is doubtful if a single person in the United States including the judge and jury in Alabama, has any thought that the black victims who are being tried at Scottsboro, have committed any crime that deserves punishment. Nevertheless, they have already been terribly punished and they are going to be further punished. They are going to be punished because an uncivilized community and a brutal judicial system cannot do anything else and be true to its past history and its present constitution. The State of Alabama, together with most of the states of the Southern South, for fifty years has invested in crime. They have used crime for private profit. They have bought and sold criminals. They have built their prosperity and private fortunes upon a treatment of the unfortunate which is contemptible, and in addition to this they have tried through their treatment of Negroes, to satisfy the blood lust of a sadistic people. They are going to continue this. They are going to continue it until the South becomes civilized, and no one living is going to see that day.

THE OUTER POCKET

THE CRISIS for November, 1933, on page 258 stated under the caption "N. R. A.": "The Home Owners Loan Corporation in Memphis, Tennessee, is openly refusing to loan money on Negro property."

Mr. Dewitt T. Alcorn, Chairman of the Negro Advisory Committee of Home Owners Loan Corporation of West Tennessee, writes in to correct this statement. He cited a radio address of recent date to the effect that "Of about \$125,000 that have been expended by the local office, \$35,000 have gone to colored home owners." Mr. Alcorn asserts his belief that the Negro Advisory Committee was advised and set up by the local Home Owners Corporation and to his knowledge "is the only such committee in the entire country"; again, "there positively has not been any discrimination, and I am advised to say to you that the files of this office are at your disposal."

THE CRISIS invites further information on this timely topic from its West Tennessee readers.

Editor of THE CRISIS:

Please discontinue sending me "THE CRISIS." I hereby donate my subscription, which was paid for two years and which I think is about a year in advance, to anyone whom you may choose.

My action in this particular is based upon my reaction to the Schuyler publication and exhibit in the last issue of "THE CRISIS." I see no reason why the valuable space of your publication, which has in the main sought to give expression to ideals and principles, should be given to the parading of what seems to be non-consequential individualism and vanity.

I have the highest regard for your militant, strong leadership in the field of independent thought and expression. There is much about you as an outstanding advocate of human rights which must be admired by sane and fair-minded people, but when THE CRISIS is given over to such peculiar and funny dissertations, I am not further interested.

With no desire whatever to controvert touching this matter, I insist that you discontinue sending me THE CRISIS.

Yours truly,

E. L. MADISON,
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Editor of THE CRISIS:

Many thanks to you for sending me THE CRISIS for December, 1933. I greatly appreciate this book and more so its contents. These are two things in the issue which attract the attention of not only myself, but a large number of my friends who have seen the book. They are "Tshckedi," and "Too Rich to be a Nigger." With the former, I followed up the case very strongly in some of our leading West Indian papers. I must own most truly that the information I obtained by reading THE CRISIS is much fuller than

what I obtained from any of the papers dealing with "the flogging of an Englishman or European by an African Chief and his Court." It is not remarkable to see how quickly this poor and unfortunate Race is preyed upon by white beasts of prey. It is like beating "a crab in his own hole or fortress." If this punishment had been inflicted by the white to the poor and unfortunate native in the most brutal manner, as I daresay is too often the case, no more would have been said about it than the wind that blows. The punishment would have rested just where it was inflicted.

L. BERKELEY WILLIAMS,
Nevis, H. W. I.

Editor of THE CRISIS:

Your December CRISIS was a real Christmas present. I always enjoy those numbers more which have longer *Postscripts*, by Dr. DuBois. I want to thank him especially for "The A. F. of L.," and for "Peace" in this (December) number. I also liked his "The Son of God" very much. I hope that Dr. DuBois remains the editor of THE CRISIS through many years to come. We all appreciate the real contribution which he has made and is making toward better human relations.

JOHN LONG, *President*,
Southern Christian College,
Edwards, Miss.

THE CRISIS

presents:

Mary White Ovington and William Pickens are executive officers of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Both are well known authors.

Norman Thomas, twice a candidate for the Presidency of the United States on the Socialist ticket, is executive director of the League for Industrial Democracy. Mr. Thomas is the author of several books.

J. B. Matthews, formerly an instructor at Fisk and Howard, has just returned from Cuba. Mr. Matthews has recently resigned the secretaryship of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. He is at present active with the American League Against War and Fascism.

Comna Asapansa-Johnson is a native of Sierra Leone, and was educated in England. He is at present the pastor of a church in Brooklyn, N. Y.

Walter White is Secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. He is the author of several books.