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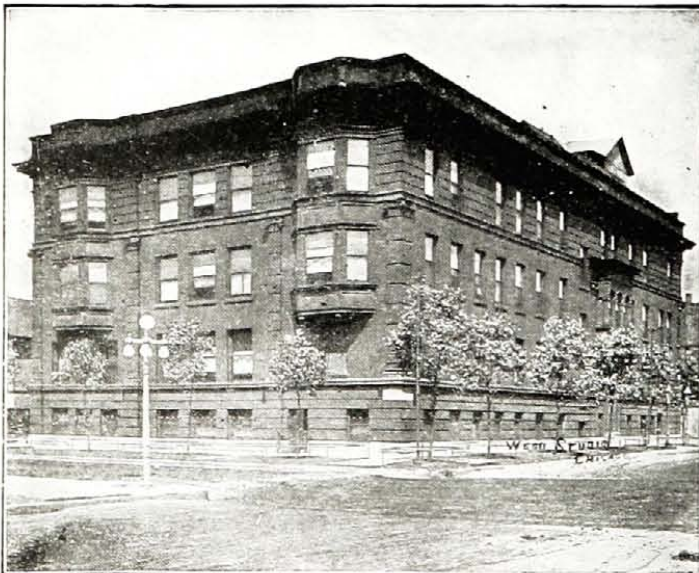
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THE CRISIS

A RECORD OF THE DARKER RACES

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF
COLORED PEOPLE, AT 70 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK CITY

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SEGREGATION



By MARY WHITE OVINGTON

READERS of THE CRISIS know that within the past three years there have been repeated efforts to legalize the segregation of Negroes in the cities of the United States. These efforts have

taken the form of ordinances prescribing the limits in which the Negroes shall live, and forbidding residence outside the prescribed limits. A second segregation has taken place since the incoming of the Democratic administration; a segregation in government departments, not sporadic, at the whim of an individual foreman, but by order of the departmental head.

The National Association and The Crisis have fought this segregation, but while it has been reduced much of it still exists.

There is, of course, nothing new in segregation. Negroes have been and are discriminated against throughout the country, and they are often segregated as they rent their dwellings and practice their trades. But it is one thing for an individual or a group of individuals to dictate a Negro policy, and it is a different and more serious thing when this policy becomes a law. In the first case, the oppressed race has a fighting chance; but when the discrimination is legalized, to combat it becomes a crime.

The policy of segregation is vigorously defended, not only by the Negrophobist, but by many kindly and intelligent people who believe that they have the colored man's welfare at heart. The arguments that the latter put forth are of importance and should be understood and met.

Legalized segregation, these people say, is necessary for the preservation of the white race. "It is a racial instinct that causes the Negro to be repulsive to the white man *when associating with him on the same social plane.*" (*Query: Is the instinct racial that causes the Negro to be repulsive to the white man when he wears the uniform of a mail clerk, but disappears when the same man dons the apron of a waiter?*) Secondly, segregation gives the Negro a definite position in the city and government, instead of leaving him entirely to the mercy of the white man who

wants to get rid of him altogether. For instance, by segregating Negroes in the Printing and Engraving Department the government may decide that a certain number shall always work in that department, and thus assure the Negro of definite employment. And in the passing of a segregation ordinance by a city, the white people may determine to do better by the colored section than they have done by the legally unrecognized present colored quarters. And lastly, segregation decreases race friction and thus is right and best. The white man does not want to associate with any Negro but the servant, and if the Negro be self-respecting he will keep out of the white man's way. As the *Baltimore Sun* puts it: "Most white men have too much self-respect to thrust themselves into company where they are not wanted. It would be well if the Negro could cultivate the same spirit. It would do far more to elevate him than the moving into white blocks."

That segregation brings a momentary relief from race friction and secures a definite place for the colored man is sometimes the case. It did so when the Negro left the white church and started his own, when he taught in his own school and doctored the patients of his own race. But the segregation with which we are concerned deals with large bodies of colored men, employees in one trade or industry, and with hundreds of families seeking places in which to live. How does it work out with these groups?

To turn to Washington. Segregation in the government departments establishes a precedent for treating white workers and colored workers as two sets of employees. At present all come under the same civil-service rules and are admitted on the same examinations. But the placing of Negroes in separate rooms, the assigning them to jobs by themselves, may easily break down their impersonal status as civil servants. They may be placed in such positions as the white men in power choose for them, and may be paid such a wage as the same powerful white men deem suitable for a Negro. This has happened so often in the South as to be entirely familiar to every southern colored laborer. The Southern Railway, for instance, has two scales of

wages—one for its white and one for its colored workers; the latter, when doing the same work, receive only two-thirds of the amount received by the white employes. Colored waiters are a segregated group and receive a smaller wage than white.

Antagonism arises when you place your laborers in segregated groups. The friction may be lessened between individual employes, but it becomes more bitter between the groups. The employer of colored and white labor in the South knows this, and when he wants to break a strike, to prevent concerted action on the part of his workingmen, he raises the cry of race solidarity and forces the white laborer back to his pitiable wage by an appeal to his still more pitiable race hatred. This is perhaps an unimportant argument regarding our wretchedly paid government workers, but it is of vast importance in connection with the efforts of southern whites to better their condition. The Negro is used against them as a strike breaker, and confusion is secured among a class that needs to be united to secure any adequate return for its toil. The official recognition of race lines at Washington will strengthen those employers who reduce wages by pitting race against race.

The advocates of segregation believe that though the Negro be separated from the white workman, and though he receive a smaller wage, he will be more likely to keep his job than if he be daily in the presence of the white man. But facts do not seem to justify this hope. The Southern Railway, of which we have spoken, expresses a liking for colored employees, and would allow them to work wherever they were fitted. But the labor unions of the South, which have now adopted a policy of complete segregation, say otherwise; and a long and bitter strike was called to prevent the Negroes from acting as firemen. And so it goes on all along the labor line. As the two races are segregated, by their unions or by their employers, friction increases and the Negro usually goes to the wall.

The legalizing of segregation in the cities, it is claimed, will provide attractive spots where Negroes may dwell. But what precedent have we for thinking that this will be the case? Perhaps those who honestly uphold segregation ordinances as conducive to the Negro's welfare are familiar with

the various races have their own attractive quarters. But these cities are under imperial rule. We must remember that America is a democracy, and is therefore particularly unsuccessful with benevolent feudalism. A benevolent despot might take control of Richmond or Atlanta and divide the city into pleasant sections, taxing heavily and impartially for the upkeep of the whole. Such a despot would make equally attractive the white and the colored quarters. But in a democracy, of white voters only, the city would not be ruled with impartiality. Colored people would be forced to remain in such localities as the white people did not like. And if by chance the colored should succeed in beautifying their quarter, they would have no assurance that their white neighbors might not any day steal it from them. Why not, indeed? The white have the power to say where the colored shall live; it is they who segregate, and it is they who can give and take away. One can imagine this policy creeping from the city into the country, and one can see the ordinances changing as the white citizens change their minds regarding the most desirable land. If anyone doubts the probability of this thing's happening, let him read the story of the white man's treatment of the North American Indian.

And yet the Negro should submit to discrimination because the white man wants him to, and, as the *Baltimore Sun* says, because it is rude to push yourself where you are not wanted. Here we have the second argument of those who favor segregation.

This argument, we may at once note, is for "colored consumption only." That is, the *Baltimore Sun*, or any other paper, would not presume to write in this fashion regarding a white nationality. First, because it does not want to offend the whites, and, secondly, because it knows that it is just because the white man has pushed himself where he was not wanted that he has attained to success. We have a democratic form of government because the workingmen of the early part of the nineteenth century forced themselves upon the unwilling legislatures and demanded representation in the council chamber. The story of the growth of our cities is the story of one despised group after another pushing its way where it was not wanted and maintain-

good and the bad of it, has been achieved by ambitious, aggressive, pushing men.

And this is not only the history of America; it is the history of England when America was but the dream of a Genoese. Probably when the first baker took off his apron and set himself up as a gentleman he was informed that he was not wanted, and that he would be far more gentlemanly if he went back to his oven. But the Bakers and the Cooks, the Tailors and the Drapers, the Shepards and the multitudinous smiths refused to cultivate the spirit recommended by the *Baltimore Sun*. They took up other professions, they moved into new neighborhoods, and their descendants figure in the telephone books in pretty much every remunerative occupation but that to which their names assign them.

No, when we tell people that they should not push themselves forward, but should stay contentedly where the ruling class puts them, it means that we want to use these people for our selfish ends. The labor world, that world that pulsates now on every continent with a common spirit, knows this, and strives hourly to wrest privilege from the wealthy few. The world of women is awakening to a realization of the same truth, and is refusing to take the place so long assigned to it by the master class. And every advance made by this world of women has been made against the policy of self-effacement preached by the *Baltimore Sun*. Sex segregation has been nearly as bad as race segregation. Education, professional and business work, freedom of thought, these belonged to the sphere in which men revolved; and it was only as women used pushing and aggressive methods that they forced an entrance.

But, says the believer in segregation, patiently or impatiently, according to his temperament: "Don't you understand that the arguments that apply to the white race do not apply to the black? It may be true that white men have been aggressive and pushing, but we cannot permit this in the colored man. If we do he will push his way into our parlor and marry our daughter. Amalgamation is unthinkable and we must be adamant in preventing it."

Here is our last and omnipresent argument. To which I for one make answer; that I do not, at least just now, desire to see amalgamation. But I oppose it whether

And as I see practically no intermarriage in those States where it is permitted, I am not concerned with the parlor. The Southern girls whom I know are quite capable of taking care of that situation without segregation ordinances.

But what about the alley? For the sake of our Christianity let us put aside our hypocrisy and recognize that it is not the white woman who needs to be protected but the colored. The country to-day has learned that women are sold by thousands into the most horrible form of slavery. Prostitution, the white-slave traffic, these are facts that we have learned to face. Let us learn also that the colored women, all of them, are subjected to insult. The white man, if he desires to do wrong, knows that the world will take his word against the word of the colored woman. He may do his worst without danger to himself. So he brings amalgamation into the alley and walks away leaving it bear the burden alone.

The outcry for segregation continually tends to make the segregated race appear as all of one kind, as all of one class. Washington has its thousands of attractive colored girls, young women who have been carefully reared and who are modest and refined. And yet these young people are frequently exposed to petty insult and persecution. The white men refuse to believe in their virtue and they are molested in many little nasty ways. They learn to despise the ranting Negrophobist, who is always first to approach them, with a bitterness that only a virtuous woman who has suffered insult can understand.

I would propose another policy for the administration and the good friends of the Negro in Washington. Drop segregation and preserve the purity of both races by respecting colored womanhood. Encourage the young women of color who are going quietly on their way and are annoyed by white men to bring their cases into court. I know a colored woman in New York who, when she was spoken to by a white man, had him arrested by a policeman and appeared against him. He gave as his excuse that he came from Virginia, but it proved of no avail with the judge, who fined him \$10 and made him apologize. Impress the white men of Washington that they will receive treatment similar to this. Try this policy for a time and see if it does not reduce

membering that friction is felt by both parties.

Imagine such a policy in a man-governed capital! But there are women in Washington, white and colored, and the time may come when they will grapple with the race

question together; and it will be hard if they cannot produce something more conducive to justice and good feeling than segregation ordinances and the platitudinous orations on the superiority of the white Americans.



THE BURDEN



COLORED MEN AND WOMEN
LYNCHED WITHOUT TRIAL

1885.....	78	1900.....	107
1886.....	71	1901.....	107
1887.....	80	1902.....	86
1888.....	95	1903.....	86
1889.....	95	1904.....	83
1890.....	90	1905.....	61
1891.....	121	1906.....	64
1892.....	155	1907.....	60
1893.....	154	1908.....	93
1894.....	134	1909.....	73
1895.....	112	1910.....	65
1896.....	80	1911.....	63
1897.....	122	1912.....	63
1898.....	102	1913.....	79
1899.....	84	1914, 11 months	52
Total		2,715	



MISSISSIPPIGRAMS

AT G—. "My son graduated from a law school in the North and came home to practice. Old Judge —, a good friend of ours for many years, advised that he leave here as these people would not tolerate a colored lawyer."

At G—. "Since Vardaman's time the good white people are afraid to say anything to protect colored people. And the others who get into office seem to do all the meanness they can to Negroes, especially to those who have property and education. They have ran several away from here. They let the lowest type of Negro do anything they want to us, and get off with it. It seems that they don't want to have decent and respectable negroes any more.

At C—. "I spoke at this place on 'The Progress and Education of the Negro.' My speech was an hour long and was applauded by some of the whites present. Next day I received this anonymous note: 'You have done us great harm.' Several Negroes came

to me and advised me not to speak any more as the whites didn't like my speech. 'What did I say to offend them?' I asked. The following is a full list:

1. I read a quotation from Mrs. L. H. Hammond's book in which a white woman is described as having entertained her beau in the kitchen.
2. I had mentioned a colored man who owned an automobile.
3. Said I had attended a northern university and traveled in Europe.
4. Said some white people came to the United States as indentured servants.
5. Said Anglo-Saxon is not the greatest race in the world in point of numbers.
6. Said I wanted to send my daughter to Paris.

It was claimed that No. 1 reflected upon white women! Numbers 2, 3 and 6 showed I believed in social equality and number 4 and 5 reflected on the white people in general. For saying these things in the course of a speech an hour long, I was advised to be quiet and get out of town as soon as possible.

At Greenwood, Miss.

Vardaman's home. Reported Verbatim.
 Negro—"Is there any mail for —?"
 Lady Clerk—(after looking over a number of letters for me)—"Is your name —?"
 Negro—"Yes."
 Clerk—"What did you say?"
 Negro—"Yes, my name is —."
 Clerk—"Where did you come from?"
 Negro—"I came from —."
 Clerk—"I thought you did not belong around here, for folks around here's got manners, and know how to speak to ladies. Why didn't you say 'Yes ma'am?'" (giving mail to me).
 Negro—"I beg your pardon madam, I meant no discourtesy. They only say 'Yes' where I came from."

A Man's Voice—"If you aint got no manners you better learn some, and that quick."

I went to my stopping place and told the incident as a great joke. The man of the house grew grave, his wife looked pale, and got up and walked out to hide her emotion. "You may congratulate yourself that there was only one white man who heard you. Don't you go to that post office any more, but you get out of this town as soon as possible," said the man of the house, "for a mob may come after you any moment."

At Ackerman, Miss.

(Negro to ticket agent on other side of office.)—"Please give me a ticket to Reform, Miss."

Agent—"Did you say Reform?"

Negro—(Having forgotten the experience of a few days before in Greenwood)—"Yes."

Agent—"Did you say 'Yes' to me?"

Negro—"Yes."

Agent—"Don't you know I am a white man? You say 'Yes sir' to me or you won't get any ticket here."

Negro—(calmly)—"I thought you sold tickets for money. I didn't know there was any special way of asking for them."

Agent—"You damn black nigger, you,—you get out of here or I'll teach you how to talk to a white man."

So I paid my fare on the train.

At Waterford, Miss.

At U. S. Post Office kept in a small store.

Negro—(opening door)—"Please tell me where I mail these letters?"

White Man—(It was a legal holiday but the store was open. Several young men had been drinking.)—"Take your head out of that door, nigger."

Negro—"I merely want to mail these letters."

White Man—"If you do not get out of there I'll fill your guts full of lead."

So I moved away without mailing my letters, and well I did, for a half hour later I met another Negro who had blood all over his face and shirt, his mouth and head having been cut, and he told me that those white men at the store did it. I asked my host what could be done. He replied: "You had better say nothing about it if you want to get away alive."

"These are a few of the experiences of a trip through Mississippi. Everywhere the

Negroes say: 'Don't write anything about conditions down here for it will make them worse, and whatever you say don't mention my name, for in this country a Negro is absolutely without protection.'"

"I have carefully inquired at a dozen newstands for THE CRISIS but did not find it, so I venture to write."—From a Traveler.



"In America 'before the war,' I do not remember this contagion of luck phenomenon. But this summer I have had evidence of the imperviousness of our social atmosphere to manners thought reasonable in Europe. At one of the chief hotels of Contrezeville, whose waters are in great repute, an American arriving just for dinner was ushered at once to an empty place at the 'table d'hote.' He attacked his soup and then gave his first glance to his neighbors. At his right was seated a well-dressed, well-mannered colored gentleman.

"The American jumped to his feet, threw his napkin at his unwelcome neighbor's head, and stalked haughtily from the room. He had made a scene, which a gentleman never does without necessity. The colored man, to whose presence none of the half-dozen nationalities at table had dreamed of objecting, sat silent and hurt. He happened to be an American citizen also. An aged Frenchman, distinguished-looking and decorated, rose from his seat and complimented the colored gentleman for keeping his temper, and expressed the general indignation at what had happened. Meanwhile the white American was heard outside wrangling with the proprietor, who informed him promptly that he was free to eat by himself at a separate table in the restaurant!"—*Evening Post* (New York City).

¶ Dr. Johann Kunst is trying to organize an association to furnish to the German press and people biographical sketches of colored men of the less advanced races who have distinguished themselves as scholars or inventors. In his travels in German Southwest Africa Doctor Kunst found that the only colonist disposed to regard the native as other than a beast of burden created for the white man's benefit was an old man who had fought in the American Civil War "and had seen the penalty of evildoing."