



Smithsonian Institution

National Museum of African American History and Culture

The Crisis Vol. 19 No. 1

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National Association for the ...
Advancement of Colored People.

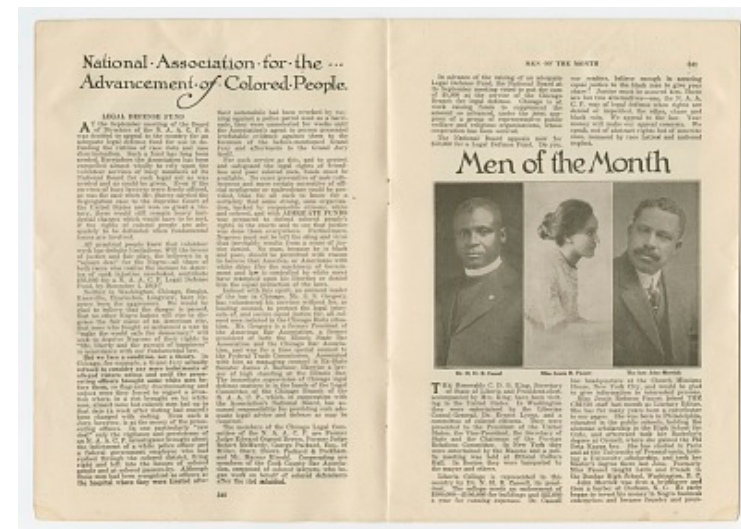
LEGAL DEFENSE FUND

AT the September meeting of the Board of Directors of the N. A. A. C. P. it was decided to appeal to the country for an adequate legal defense fund for the use in defending the victims of race riots and race discrimination. Such a fund has long been needed. Heretofore the Association has been compelled almost wholly to rely upon the volunteer services of busy members of its National Board for such legal aid as was needed and as could be given. Even if the services of busy lawyers were freely offered, as was the case when Mr. Storey carried the Segregation case to the Supreme Court of the United States and won so great a victory, there would still remain heavy incidental charges which would have to be met, if the rights of colored people are adequately to be defended when fundamental issues are involved.

All practical people know that volunteer work has definite limitations. Will the lovers of justice and fair play, the believers in a "square deal" for the Negro—all those of both races who realize the menace to America of rank injustice unrebutted, contribute \$50,000 for a N. A. A. C. P. Legal Defense Fund, by December 1, 1919?

Neither in Washington, Chicago, Omaha, Knoxville, Charleston, Longview, have Negroes been the aggressors. We would be glad to believe that the danger is passed, that no other Negro haters will rise to disgrace the fair name of an American city, that none who fought or acclaimed a war to "make the world safe for democracy," will seek to deprive Negroes of their rights to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" in accordance with our fundamental law.

But we face a condition, not a theory. In Chicago, for example, a Grand Jury actually refused to consider any more indictments of alleged rioters unless and until the prosecuting officers brought some white men before them, so flagrantly discriminating and unjust were they forced to regard a situation where, in a riot brought on by white men, almost none but colored men had up to that date (a week after rioting had ceased) been charged with rioting. Even such a Jury, however, is at the mercy of the prosecuting officers. In one particularly "raw deal" only the vigilance and persistence of an N. A. A. C. P. investigator brought about the indictment of a white police officer and a federal government employee who had rushed through the colored district, firing right and left into the houses of colored people and at colored passers-by. Although these men had been recognized as officers at the hospital where they were treated after their automobile had been wrecked by running against a police patrol used as a barricade, they were unmolested for weeks until the Association's agent in person presented irrefutable evidence against them to the foreman of the before-mentioned Grand Jury and afterwards to the Grand Jury itself.



For such service as this, and to protect and safeguard the legal rights of friendless and poor colored men, funds must be available. No surer preventive of mob ruthlessness and more certain corrective of official negligence or malevolence could be provided, than for all such to know for a certainty that some strong, sane organization, backed by responsible citizens, white and colored, and with ADEQUATE FUNDS was prepared to defend colored people's rights in the courts and to see that justice was done them everywhere. Furthermore, Negroes must not be left the sting and virus that inevitably results from a sense of justice denied. No man, because he is black and poor, should be permitted with reason to believe that America, or Americans with white skins (for the machinery of Government and law is controlled by white men) have trampled upon his liberties or denied him the equal protection of the laws.

Imbued with this spirit, an eminent leader of the bar in Chicago, Mr. S. S. Gregory, has volunteered his services without fee, as leading counsel, to protect the legal interests of, and secure equal justice for, all colored men indicted in the Chicago Riots situation. Mr. Gregory is a former President of the American Bar Association, a former president of both the Illinois State Bar Association and the Chicago Bar Association, and was for a time special counsel to the Federal Trade Commission. Associated with him as managing counsel is Ex-State Senator James J. Barbour, likewise a lawyer of high standing at the Illinois Bar. The immediate supervision of Chicago legal defense matters is in the hands of the Legal Committee of the Chicago Branch of the N. A. A. C. P., which, in cooperation with the Association's National Board, has assumed responsibility for providing such adequate legal advice and defense as may be required.

The members of the Chicago Legal Committee of the N. A. A. C. P. are Former Judge Edward Osgood Brown, Former Judge Robert McMurdy, George Packard, Esq., of Miller, Starr, Brown Packard & Peckham, and Mr. Marcus Hirschl. Cooperating are members of the Cook County Bar Association, composed of colored lawyers, who began work on behalf of colored defendants after the riot subsided.

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In advance of the raising of an adequate Legal Defense Fund, the National Board at its September meeting voted to put the sum of \$5,000 at the service of the Chicago Branch for legal defense. Chicago is at work raising funds to supplement the amount so advanced, under the joint auspices of a group of representative public welfare and religious organizations, whose cooperation has been secured.

The National Board appeals now for \$50,000 for a Legal Defense Fund. Do you, our readers, believe enough in securing equal justice to the black man to give your share? Justice must be assured him. There are but two alternatives--one, the N. A. A. C. P. way of legal defense when rights are denied or imperiled, the other, chaos and black ruin. We appeal to the law. Your money will make our appeal concrete. We

speak, not of abstract rights but of concrete ones, menaced by race hatred and national neglect.

Men of the Month

[[image]]
[[caption]] Dr. N. H. B. Cassel [[/caption]]

[[image]]
[[caption]] Miss Jessie R. Fauset [[/caption]]

[[image]]
[[caption]] The late John Merrick [[/caption]]

THE Honorable C. D. B. King, Secretary of tof Liberia and President-Elect, accompanied by Mrs. Kin, have been visiting in the United States. In Washington they were entertained by the Liberian Consul-General, Dr. Ernest Lyons, and a committee of colored citizens. They were presented to the President of the United States, the Vice-President, the Secretary of State and the Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee. In New York they were entertained by the Masons and a public meeting was held at Ethical Culture Hall. In Boston they were banqueted by the mayor and others.

Liberia College is represented in this country by Dr. N. H. B. Cassell, its president. The college needs an endowment of \$500,000—\$100,000 for buildings and \$25,000 a year for running expenses. Dr. Cassell has headquarters at the Church Missions House, New York City, and would be glad to give information to interested persons.

Miss Jessie Redmon Fauset joined THE CRISIS staff last month as Literary Editor. She has for many years been a contributor to our pages. She was born in Philadelphia, educated in the public schools, holding the alumnae scholarship in the High School for Girls, and afterward took her Bachelor's degree at Cornell, where she gained the Phi Beta Kappa key. She has studied in Paris and at the University of Pennsylvania, holding a University scholarship, and took her Master's degree there last June. Formerly Miss Fauset taught Latin and French in the Dunbar High School, Washington, D.C.

John Merrick was first a bricklayer and then a barber at Durham, N.C. He early began to invest his money in Negro business enterprises and became founder and president

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