



Smithsonian Institution

National Museum of African American History and Culture

The Crisis, Vol. 6, No. 4

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has been swept away in the wave of righteousness which is passing over this country from coast to coast and from the gulf to the Great Lakes. Africans and Orientals have little more to fear from them. They have been caught in the maelstrom of their own wickedness. So hath it ever been, so must it ever be with those who build a throne of self-exaltation on a dais of wanton injustice and abuse of power over the lowly and defenseless."

AFTERMATHS.

THE CRISIS had occasion some time ago to call upon two Negro newspapers of the New York to lay down the arms of slander, vituperation and vulgar personalities with which, week after week, their proprietors were surfeiting a public that calls for better things. The battle was stopped by legal proceedings, but the man who was worsted in this long drawn-out engagement has since, as before, made the editor of the THE CRISIS the object of a weekly series of calumnious falsehoods.

One of these was a letter purporting to come from somebody in Seattle, expressing the dissatisfaction of an audience in that city, not only with a lecture by Mr. Du Bois, but with his personal behavior toward his hearers. Dr. Du Bois has received, unsolicited, letters signed by the lady and gentleman mentioned as having been discourteously treated by their guest. They brand the alleged letter as a falsehood, assert that the writer had no authority whatever to use their names in connection with it, declare that both the name and address given in the disreputable newspaper are fictitious, and affirm their entire satisfaction with Mr. Du Bois and the message he brought them. The local colored paper, the Seattle Searchlight, reported the lecture as follows:

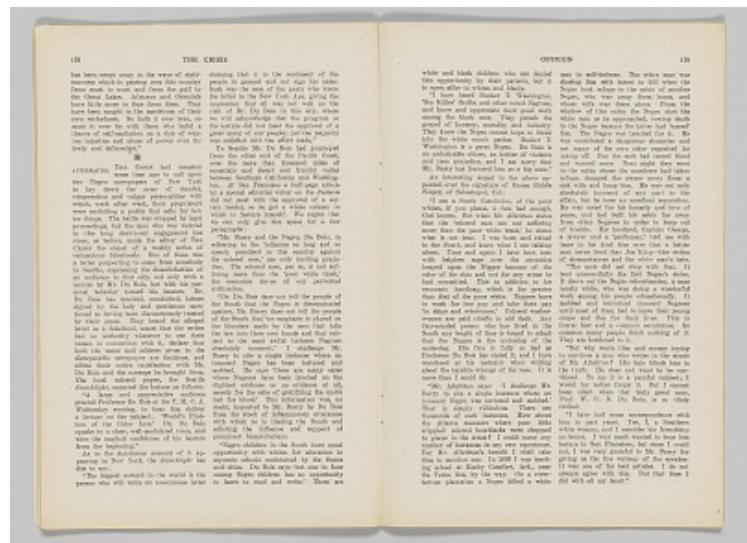
"A large and appreciative audience greeted Professor Du Bois at the Y.M.C.A. Wednesday evening, to hear him deliver a lecture on the subject: 'World's Problem of the Color Lin.' Dr. Du Bois speaks in a clear, well-modulated voice, and wins the implicit confidence of his hearers from the beginning."

As to the slanderous account of it appearing in New York, the Searchlight has this to say:

"The biggest coward in the world is the person who will write an anonymous letter claiming that it is the sentiment of the people in general and not sign his name. Such was the ease of the party who wrote the letter to the New York Age, giving the impression that all was not well on the visit of Dr. Du Bois in this city, where we will acknowledge that the program or the lecture did not meet the approval of a great many of our people; yet the majority was satisfied with the effort made."

To Seattle Mr. Du Bois had journeyed from the other end of the Pacific Coast, over the more than thousand miles of the mountain and desert and fruitful valley between Southern California and Washington. At San Francisco a half-page article by a special editorial writer on the Bulletin did not meet with the approval of a certain reader, so he got a whole column in which to feature himself. We regret that we can only give him space for a few paragraphs:

"Mr. Barry and the Negro, Du Bois, in referring to the 'infamies so long and so openly practised in this country against the colored race,' are only inciting prejudice. The colored race, per se, is not suffering more than 'poor white trash,' the economic slaves of our perverted civilization. "Dr. Du Bois dare not tell the people of the South that the Negro is discriminated against, Mr. Barry dare not tell the people of the South that 'no emphasis is placed on the blunders made by the men that take the law into their own hands and that subject to the awful tortures Negroes absolutely innocent.' I challenge Mr. Barry to cite a single



instance where an innocent Negro has been tortured and mobbed. He says 'there are many cases where Negroes have been lynched on the slightest evidence or no evidence at all, merely for the sake of gratifying the mob's lust for blood.' This information was, no doubt, imparted to Mr. Barry by Du Bois from his stock of inflammatory utterances with which he is libeling the South and enlisting the influence and support of prominent humanitarians.

"Negro children in the South have equal opportunity with whites for education in separate schools maintained by the States and cities. Du Bois says 'not one in four among Negro children has an opportunity to learn to read and write.' There are white and black children who are denied this opportunity by their parents, but is open alike to whites and blacks.

"I have heard Booker T. Washington, 'Sin Killer' Griffin and other noted Negroes, and know and appreciate their good work among the black race. They preach the gospel of honesty, morality and industry. They know the Negro cannot hope to break into the white man's parlor. Booker T. Washington is a great Negro. Du Bois is an undesirable citizen, an incitor of violence and race prejudice, and I am sorry that Mr. Barry has featured him as a big man."

An interesting sequel to the above appeared over the signature of Emma Riddle Singer, of Sebastopol, Cal.:

"I am a South Carolinian, of the poor whites, if you please, a fate bad enough, God knows. But when Mr. Albritton states that the 'colored race are not suffering more than the poor white trash,' he states what is not true. I was born and raised in the South and I know what I am talking about. Time and again I have been torn with helpless rage over the atrocities heaped upon the Nigger because of the color of his skin and not for any crime he had committed. This is an addition to his economic handicap, which is far greater than that of the poor white. Niggers have to work for less pay and take their pay 'in chips and whetstones.' Colored washer-women are paid chiefly in old duds. Any fair-minded person who has lived in the South any length of time is bound to admit that the Nigger is the underdog of the underdog. His fate is fully as bad as Professor Du Bois has stated it, and I have wondered at his restraint when writing about the terrible wrongs of his race. It is more than I could do.

"Mr. Albritton says: 'I challenge Mr. Barry to cite a single instance where an innocent Negro was tortured and mobbed.' That is simply ridiculous. There are thousands of such instances. How about the Atlanta massacre where poor little crippled colored bootblacks were chopped to pieces in the street? I could name any number of instances in my own experience. For Mr. Albritton's benefit I shall take time to mention one. In 1899 I was teaching school at Rocky Comfort, Ark., near the Texas line, by the way. On a river-bottom plantation a Negro killed a white man in self-defense. The white man was chasing him with intent to kill when the Negro took refuge in the cabin of another Negro, who was away from home, and whose wife was there alone. From the window of this cabin the Negro shot the white man as he approached, vowing death to the Negro because the latter had 'sasssed' him. The Negro was lynched for it. He was considered a dangerous character and not many of his own color regretted his taking off. But the mob had tasted blood and wanted more. Next night they went to the cabin where the murderer had taken refuge, dragged the owner away from a sick wife and hung him. He was not only absolutely innocent of any part in the affair, but he bore an excellent reputation. He was noted for his honesty and love of peace, and had built his cabin far away from other Negroes in order to keep out of trouble. His landlord, Captain George, a lawyer and a 'gentleman,' told me with tears in his kind blue eyes that a better man never lived than Joe King-this victim of circumstances and the white man's hate. "The mob did not stop with that. It beat unmercifully the first Negro's

sister. It drove out the Negro schoolteacher, a man nearly white, who was doing a wonderful work among his people educationally. It mobbed and terrorized innocent Negroes until most of them had to leave their young crops and flee for their lives. This is literal fact and a common occurrence. So common many people think nothing of it. They are hardened to it.

"But why waste time and energy trying to convince a man who writes in the strain of Mr. Albritton? His hate blinds him to the truth. He does not want to be convinced. To me it is a painful subject; I would far rather forget it. But I cannot keep silent when that truly great man, Prof. W. E. B. Du Bois, is so vilely reviled.

"I have had some correspondence with him in past years. Yes, I, a Southern white woman, and I consider his friendship an honor. I very much wanted to hear him lecture in San Francisco, but since I could not, I was very grateful to Mr. Barry for giving us the fine writeup of the speaker. It was one of his best articles. I do not always agree with him. But that time I did with all my heart."

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