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Angry Saxons and Negro Education in The Crisis

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JOSH GIBSON
(Mightiest batsman in Negro baseball—see page 135)

PLAY BALL!

H. B. WEBBER and OLIVER BROWN

A SPOTLIGHT ON HARLEM HOUSING

RAPHAEL KNIGHT

FIGHTING SYPHILIS

ALBERT L. HINTON

THE CRISIS IS "NOT APPROVED"

*A Ruling by the Board of Education
in Washington, D. C.*

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KATHERINE F. O'BRIEN

Angry Saxons and Negro Education

By Anna J. Cooper

A CONFESSION of faith, clear and unequivocal, from a U. S. Senator contains these words: "No statutory law, no organic law, no military law supersedes the law of racial necessity and social identity. We have no intention of ever admitting the colored man as our social equal and we can keep him in his place, his inferior social station, by keeping away from him."

And that's that.

A colored leader of white American thought, at once statesman and politician, has enunciated a policy enthusiastically hailed as workable: "The two races can be as separate as fingers and as solidly strong as the hand."

That, also, is that.

Now when the champions of either side shake hands before crossing swords in the ring, the one mutters: "We agree," eyeing the other grimly, "equal as fingers" (crossed at the time) "but *separate*." And his prescient mind vitalizes the efficient thumb, firm and unyielding over mailed fists.

"We agree," the dark brother replies, "separate, but *equal*!" and he looks expectantly on the wriggling little fingers and set to pop over one by one, now with a knockout in the prize ring, now with a hundred meter dash in the Olympics. "An American Negro youth ventures on to the stage occupied prominently by a Nazi dictator and steals the spot light from him for a little while" says the Cleveland Plain Dealer.

A sweet singer, a wonder working chemist, a sacrificial hero emerging from the ghetto to charm and bless—"separate," but potentially identical the same elemental human, educable like the rest and capable of patriotic cooperation with any and all forces that make for righteousness in a democratic civilization. But here ensues a titanic struggle between the American conscience and expert efficiency, both represented by the dominant thumb among very unequal fingers and virtually conceding equality while demanding separation. *A race must have its leaders provided with a liberal education.* Hence a national Negro university is visioned in equipment and appurtenances equal to the best. Efficiency experts contrive attractive sinecures in officialdom, toothsome sops for Cerberus, guaranteed to keep that beast off at the approved distance from all movements in the life stream. Due honor and high praise are loudly acclaimed for Negro

spirituals, Negro literature, Negro history, Negro "attempts" at art. But don't try to crash the gates on a play of Shakespeare or to listen in on a Wagnerian opera, or to study the marbles of Phidias and Praxiteles. Education *must* be separate, that is sure. The law of the Medes and Persians changeth not. Jim Crow in hotels and common carriers amounts to nothing unless you can segregate cultures. "The mind is its own place" and Education is its Maker.

The finale in this trilogy of the American saga is the offering made by Lord Bryce, by common consent the greatest analyst and commentator on our Commonwealth and a mighty wise counselor on modern democracies, whose suggestion after all may be the guiding thread out of this labyrinth of purposes. He says: "It needs something more than the virtue of a philosopher, it needs the tenderness of a saint to preserve the same courtesy and respect towards members of a backward race as are extended naturally to equals . . . As regards political rights, race and blood should not be made the ground of discrimination. Where the bulk of the colored race are obviously unfit for political power a qualification based on property and education might be established which should permit the upper section to enjoy the suffrage. Such qualifications would doubtless exclude some of the poorest and most ignorant whites, but it is better to face this difficulty than to wound and alienate the whole of the colored race by placing them without the pale of civic functions and duties. As regards social relations, law can do but little save in the way of expressing the view the state takes of how its members should behave to one another. Good feeling and good manners cannot be imposed by statute. When the educated sections of the dominant race realize how essential it is to the future of their country that the backward be helped forward and rendered friendly, their influence will by degrees filter down through the masses and efface the scorn they feel for the weaker.

"A philosopher may say 'let who will make the laws if I make the manners;' for where manners are wholesome the laws will be just and justly administered. Manners depend on sentiment and sentiment changes slowly. Still it changes. It has changed as regards torture. It has changed as regards slavery. The sentiment of race pride, the keenness of race rivalry has been intensified, but the sense of a common humanity has grown stronger. When we think of the problems which are now being raised by the contact of races, clouds seem to hang heavy on the horizon of the future; but light streams in when we remember that the spirit in which civilized states are preparing to meet those problems is higher and purer than it was when cen-

turies ago the great outward movement of the European peoples began."

And that, undoubtedly, is that.

God give us leaders and teachers on both sides who, forgetting the flesh pots of Egypt and the spaghetti of Rome will join open palms in honest cooperation to work and pray for a better, nobler, truer America.

Letters from Readers

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CRISIS:—Your editorial "We Lose, but We Win," so exactly puts the finger on the bright spot of promise that I must congratulate you. The editorial is far more than compensation; it is prognosis. Slowly, but surely, justice dawns, and this editorial is a harbinger. ". . . if winter come, can spring be far behind?"

T. V. SMITH

Department of Philosophy, University of Chicago

Chicago, Ill.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CRISIS:—I was very much impressed with the editorial in the April issue of THE CRISIS which points out the analogy of the situation of Jews in Nazi Germany with that of the Negroes in this, our own country, and have mentioned it to various people, who have been greatly interested, so much so that I have been asked for copies.

I don't know when I have seen an editorial—or in fact any article even—that has presented this inconsistent situation so succinctly and at the same time so honestly. I think it should have as wide a circulation as possible—especially in Cincinnati where we have a northern exposure with a southern psychology.

Will you please send me four (4) copies of this issue and I shall do my best to see that they are distributed among people who will make good use of them? Thank you.

MARY D. BRITE

Cincinnati, O.

Named Director of National Housing Conference

Mrs. Ernest A. Alexander has been named a member of the board of directors of the National Public Housing Conference for 1938. There are twenty-four directors and Mrs. Alexander is the first colored person ever named. Mrs. Alexander is also a member of the Y.W.C.A. public affairs committee and that of the N.A.A.C.P. She is treasurer of The Crisis Publishing Co., Inc.

Minnesota Council

The Minnesota Negro Council has issued its first annual report. The Council is composed of young progressive colored men and women who are attacking civil problems in the Twin Cities and throughout the state.



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