

THE MONITOR

A WEEKLY NEWSPAPER DEVOTED PRIMARILY TO THE INTERESTS OF COLORED AMERICANS

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We, as publishers, MUST comply with the law or pay the penalty.

THE RIGHT TO SUICIDE

A man seventy-five years of age, author and scientist, recently committed suicide here, leaving a rather lengthy letter in which he seeks to justify his act. He makes the fallacious claim that inasmuch as his life is his own, he has a right to do with it as he pleases. There are, no doubt, some who will claim that his position is sound. His reasoning, however, is absolutely wrong. Man has no right to take that which he cannot give. Life is a gift from God. It is not any man's own to do with as he pleases. Murder is the wilful deliberate taking of human life. If it be wrong to take the life of another, be it that of an unborn babe, one of tender years or one grown old, it is wrong to take one's own life. Self murder or suicide is an abhorrent crime and cannot be justified by an process of reasoning. The right to suicide runs on all fours with the right to murder. If murder be right, and who claims that it is, then self-murder or suicide is right.

COMMON DANGER, BUT—

Stories of wilful neglect and indifference toward the sufferings of Negroes in the flood districts of the South, which are trickling in from many sources would be unbelievable were it not for the degraded sentiment of that section toward black Americans.

It would seem that in the face of this great calamity, in which both races are common sufferers, wilful neglect and discrimination would be forgotten.

Prejudice and tradition are stubborn things even in the face of danger and death.

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE

If there is one organization in the United States, formed to promote and protect the interest of American Negroes, which we endorse without reservations, it is the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. There are several features about this great Association which stand out so boldly, that they significantly separate it from all other organizations of similar nature.

Off-hand, we think of these:

1. This Association was conceived and birthed for the purpose of procuring for ALL Negroes in America the freedom and rights guaranteed to them under the Constitution. It is unselfish. One does not have to be a member to receive its benefits.

2. Its staff of workers, added to the faculty of any university in America, would raise the average of that faculty in learning and intelligence.

3. There has never been in its history an instance of temporizing when the principles for which it stands were at stake.

4. Neither the honesty, integrity nor the courage of any member of its staff, can be questioned by its bitterest opponent.

5. The learning, the efficiency, and the ability of the individual members of its staff are such, that with the whole of America to pick from, we do not believe that a single substitution could be made that would

strengthen the organization.

6. Its many accomplishments are such, that almost any single one justifies its organization, maintenance, and continuance.

Consider a few:

(a) The anti-lynching fight and program.

(b) The residential segregation victory.

(c) The overthrow of the white primary.

(d) The stopping of the grandfather clause disfranchisement farce.

(e) The expose of peonage.

(f) The Sweet case.

(g) The Arkansas cases.

(h) The Aiken case.

The program of this organization has been so economically conducted,

that the cost per capita to the Negroes of the United States during its seventeen years of successful warfare, has been practically nothing.

If the 12,000,000 Negroes in the United States were compelled to pay for its work, this work has extended over a period of seventeen years, seventeen years of warfare that required the quintessence of courage and brains, the tax would be about 10 cents per person.

We, therefore, endorse the work of this organization. We stand solidly behind these great men who are responsible for the wonders which it has performed. The Negro's best opportunity for complete freedom, political equality, economic opportunity as well as unhampered justice, is in the hands of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

If you are not a member, what is your alibi?—From The White and Black Chronicle, Akron, Ohio.

LINCOLN, NEBRASKA

The Mary Talbot club, Mrs. Katherine Moore, presiding, gave their musical tea in the afternoon, by way of an entertainment for mothers and daughters, which was nicely attended. At night, "Buds of Promise" rendered a brief program, and a sermon by the pastor, all of which was enjoyable.

Attorney Perry of Little Rock, Ark., is in the city on business. Mr. Perry appears to be a man of note. He has addressed several gatherings in our midst.

Mr. and Mrs. William Florence of Missouri Valley, Ia., were Lincoln visitors the past week.

Mr. and Mrs. L. J. Gordon, who have spent the winter season in the city, have returned to their home in Beatrice, where they immediately take up work again.

The Utopian Art Club was very nicely entertained on last Thursday night by Mrs. Margaret Lyons, at the home of Mr. and Mrs. G. B. Todd, on South Twentieth street.

Mrs. R. E. Knight is home from Kansas City.

The chicken dinner given at Quinn Chapel A. M. E. church on Monday night under the management of Mrs. Paul L. Moore, and assisted by other ladies, was a booming success. The affair was for the benefit of Lebanon Lodge No. 3 A. F. and A. M. The ladies were assisted by committees of Master Masons, and a large number of Masons were present. Our white friends were largely in evidence.

The students attending the State University gave a dinner dance in Rosewild party house last Saturday night, which was well attended, and a good time had.

Services were enjoyed at Mt. Zion Baptist church Sunday. The pastor delivered a fine sermon at morning hour.

RESCINDING JIM CROW LAWS

Under sponsorship of the Inter-racial Committee, a bill was introduced in the Maryland legislature to abolish the state jim crow car law. This bill, according to the secretary of the Inter-racial committee, Mr. T. J. Calloway, had the backing of some of the most influential public men in the state. Senator Bruce stated some time ago that the time had come for the elimination of such distinction in transportation in the state of Maryland. It seems that the bill was tabled in the committee, although the majority canvassed beforehand was supposed to be in favor of it. Mr. Calloway is still hopeful of the resurrection of the bill and gives the assurance of Governor Ritchie and other powerful democratic supporters as basis of his hope.

This is perhaps the first attempted bit of legislation in recent years to wipe out odious race discrimination in state laws. It gives hope that all such discriminatory regulations which were borne of local condition will pass away when such conditions are ameliorated. Most of the iniquitous distinctions in Northern states were wiped out by the moral crusade of the Civil War. At least 15 Northern states had provisions limiting the franchise to white men when the Fifteenth Amendment was passed. Some of these states voluntarily removed such racial distinctions by the revision of their own constitutions, while in other states, like Ohio and Oregon, such racial legislation was wiped out by the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. The state of Michigan, at one time had a law forbidding the intermarriage between the races, but this discriminatory provision was wiped out by a subsequent state law.

This first attempt to eradicate the jim crow car law makes me reminiscent. One harks back to the days of the Afro-American Council when race-wide effort was launched to check the rising tendency, especially in its inter-state features. A considerable legal defence fund was raised for this purpose, of which Booker T. Washington contributed or procured by far the greater part.

When congress was about to revise the Inter-State Commerce Act, the Hon. Whitfield McKinley and myself called upon Senator Dolliver, of Iowa, chairman of the committee, and went away supposing that we had his endorsement of our proposition that there should be no discrimination of any kind in any inter-state passenger traffic. But on a subsequent call we were frankly and flatly informed that the pending measure would be limited wholly to material freight.

About this time, the Hon. Archibald Grimke and myself called upon Senator Foraker, to engage his good offices in behalf of guaranteeing no racial discrimination in inter-state travel. The good senator informed us that he would gladly work for a provision for equal accommodation, but that such a position as we suggested would be simply impossible in face of prevailing situations. We thereupon advised him that we would prefer that no action at all should be taken unless there was full guarantee of no distinction or discrimination and told him that we could secure equal, but separate accommodations from the Southern states, and that we preferred that the federal government should not touch the question one way or the other, unless it was prepared to act upon the broad foundation of no discrimination between American citizens. He thought that our attitude was very shortsighted and unwise.

The first suit brought to test the jim crow car law was, I believe, instituted by Professor William H. Council of the Alabama Normal Institute. The case was lost. The supreme court has decided that the states may provide separate, but equal accommodations for the races, without violating the federal Constitution. This decision seemed to settle the legal status of jim crow car laws, so far as inter-state travel is concerned.

The supreme court, has also gone on record to the effect that similar arrangements for inter-state travel may be unconstitutional. If I am mistaken about this, some of my legal critics are invited to set me right.

In those days came William Henry Harrison Hart of the Law School of Howard university, big of body, brave of heart and intrepid of spirit, of powerful intellect and learned in the law. The state of Maryland had just enacted its separate car law, and was operating it in both its inter-state and intra-state application. Professor Hart secured an inter-state ticket from New York to Washington. On reaching the Maryland border, he was asked to change to the jim crow car. This he stoutly refused to do. He was ejected and lodged in the Elkton jail. There-

upon he brought suit in the courts of Maryland, and won. The court of appeals, the highest tribunal in that jurisdiction, held that the law did not apply to inter-state passengers, but merely to local traffic. Every Negro in the nation owes Professor Hart a debt of gratitude which remains unpaid. But for his brave and manly act, every colored passenger, from whatever section of the country he might hail, would be compelled to ride in a jim crow car, in order to reach the national capital.

From the beginning, the border warfare between freedom and slavery waged along the Maryland line. The Mason and Dixon line, of far-flung political significance, marked the boundary between Maryland and Pennsylvania. The Confederate army, in its northern movement, was turned back at the edge of Maryland border. The revised constitutions swept through the Southern states like wildfire, but was checked by the Maryland court of appeals. And now comes the jim crow car law, whose rescindment is at least under consideration. Let us consider some of the reasons which render such action on the part of Maryland feasible and seasonable at this time. Segregation, separate schools, jim crow cars and anti-miscegenation laws grow out of the common roots of race prejudice. It is stimulated in the main by the relative number of Negroes. The effect will continue as long as the cause remains.

The main traffic in Maryland is inter-state. The two great railroad systems, the Pennsylvania and the Baltimore & Ohio, which dominate the traffic of the state, are through lines in all directions. The Negro local travel is almost negligible. One may travel on the jim crow cars in southern or western Maryland for hours without encountering more than one or two fellow passengers. In the main, the Negroes are going to Washington on the South or to Wilmington and Philadelphia on the North or to Harrisburg and Pittsburg on the West. All of those are inter-state passengers. The empty jim crow cars are but a nuisance and an expense. Furthermore, the Negro's contingent in Maryland, outside of the city of Baltimore, is relatively declining. The Negroes are leaving the agricultural sections of the state for the metropolitan city or for regions further north. The jim crow car has little future prospect in the state.

The proposed action on the part of Maryland still further indicates that the Negro must look to local, rather than to national action for tangible relief from the difficulties under which he labors. The elimination of the inter-state feature of the Maryland jim crow car law represents the only concrete advantage, which, I now recall, that has come to the race from agitation against jim crow cars. The defeat of the proposed restriction is to the franchise by the Maryland courts is the only action as I now recall, which has actually enhanced the power of the ballot in the black man's hands. The recent decision in the Texas case is magnificent, but the distance between Washington and Texas is magnificent also. Unless some liberal movement springs up in Texas the victory, in which we now exult, will be but a paper decision. It is also interesting to note that Mr. Calloway throws the burden of advantage of this action or the brunt of disadvantage upon the democratic party which now has the reigns of power. If the democrats put this over, they will deprive the republicans of further supply of soft soap upon which to fool the glib Negro voter. I recall how the democrats gave the Negro teacherships in the public schools of Baltimore, after long and arduous efforts.

In this connection, it might also be well to say that West Virginia is the only Southern state which has no jim crow car system. Why? Here-

which I learned while traveling in the state. Haskell, the leader of the democratic host promised the Negro leaders that if they came with them, the race might have anything in reason as their just share of the common victory. He also advised, that if the democrats won without their aid, they would give them hell. The Negro refused the offer, Haskell turned to the Indians. The democrats won. Today the racial restrictions in Oklahoma are among the severest of any Southern state.

Let us hope and pray that Maryland will do the sensible thing in being the first to abolish jim crow cars, and that the Negroes of Maryland will do the sensible thing in bringing it to pass.

—KELLY MILLER.

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