

fathers of colored children, there is scarcely a case on record where such a father has been held legally responsible.

Such evils led to widespread violence in the South, to murder and mobs. Probably in no country in the civilized world did human life become so cheap. This condition prevails among both white and black and characterizes the South even to our day. A spirit of lawlessness became widespread. White people paid no attention to their own laws. White men became a law unto themselves, and black men, so far as their aggressions were confined to their own people, need not fear intervention of white police. Practically all men went armed and the South reached the extraordinary distinction of being the only modern civilized country where human beings were publicly burned alive. Southern papers specialized on Negro crime with ridicule and coarse caricature. The police court where hearts bled was a matter of hilarious newspaper laughter while a note of decency and success among Negroes was buried on a back page or ignored entirely.

The political success of the doctrine of racial separation, which overthrew Reconstruction by uniting the planter and the poor white, was far exceeded by its astonishing economic results. The theory of laboring class unity rests upon the assumption that laborers, despite internal jealousies, will unite because of their opposition to exploitation by the capitalists. According to this, even after a part of the poor white laboring class became identified with the planters, and eventually displaced them, their interests would be diametrically opposed to those of the mass of white labor, and of course to those of the black laborers. This would throw white and black labor into one class, and precipitate a united fight for higher wage and better working conditions.

Most persons do not realize how far this failed to work in the South, and it failed to work because the theory of race was supplemented by a carefully planned and slowly evolved method, which drove such a wedge between the white and black workers that there probably are not today in the world two groups of workers with practically identical interests who hate and fear each other so deeply and persistently and who are kept so far apart that neither sees anything of common interest.

It must be remembered that the white group of laborers, while they received a low wage, were compensated in part by a sort of public and psychological wage. They were given public deference and titles of courtesy because they were white. They were admitted freely with all classes of white people to public functions, public parks, and the best schools. The police were drawn from their ranks, and the courts dependent upon their votes, treated them with such leniency as to encourage lawlessness. Their vote selected public officials, and white



this had small effect upon the economic situation, it had great effect upon their personal treatment and the deference shown them. White schoolhouses were the best in the community, and conspicuously placed, and they cost anywhere from twice to ten times as much per capita as the colored schools. The newspapers specialized on news that flattered the poor whites and almost utterly ignored the Negro except in crime and ridicule.

On the other hand, in the same way, the Negro was subject to public insult; was afraid of mobs; was liable to the jibes of children and the unreasoning fears of white women; and was compelled almost continuously to submit to various badges of inferiority. The result of this was that the wages of both classes could be kept low, the whites fearing to be supplanted by Negro labor, the Negroes always being threatened by the substitution of white labor.

Mob violence and lynching were the inevitable result of the attitude of these two classes and for a time were a sort of permissible Roman holiday for the entertainment of vicious whites. One can see for these reasons why labor organizers and labor agitators made such small headway in the South. They were, for the most part, appealing to laborers who would rather have low wages upon which they could eke out an existence than see colored labor with a decent wage. White labor saw in every advance of Negroes a threat to their racial prerogatives, so that in many districts Negroes were afraid to build decent homes or dress well, or own carriages, bicycles or automobiles, because of possible retaliation on the part of the whites.

Thus every problem of labor advance in the South was skillfully turned by demagogues into a matter of inter-racial jealousy. Perhaps the most conspicuous proof of this was the Atlanta riot in 1906, which followed Hoke Smith's vicious attempt to become United States Senator on a platform which first attacked corporations and then was suddenly twisted into scandalous traducing of the Negro race.

To this day no casual and unsophisticated reader of the white Southern press could possibly gather that the American Negro masses were anything but degraded, ignorant, inefficient examples of an incurably inferior race.

The result of all this had to be unfortunate for the Negro. He was a caged human being, driven into a curious mental provincialism. An inferiority complex dominated him. He did not believe himself a man like other men. He could not teach his children self-respect. The Negro as a group gradually lost his manners, his courtesy, his light-hearted kindness. Large numbers sank into apathy and fatalism. There was no chance for the black man; there was no use in striving; ambition was not for Negroes.