

scapgoats for the crimes of others—(hear, hear).—  
 Mr. J. B. COLLINS proposed and Mr. B. IMPEY seconded  
 the following resolution:—"This meeting, having heard  
 the recital of deeds of injustice and inhumanity  
 systematically practised by the white population of the  
 Southern States of America towards the coloured  
 population of those States, hereby records its abhorrence  
 of such deeds, and resolves that a branch of the  
 Society for the 'Furtherance of the Brotherhood of  
 Man' shall be formed in this city, with the view particu-  
 larly of enlightening public opinion in Great Britain,  
 America, and elsewhere on conduct so opposed to the  
 first principles alike of Christianity and civilisation;"  
 and in supporting it, Miss IMPEY explained the objects of  
 the "Society for the Furtherance of the Brotherhood of  
 Man," which she said had been started since Miss Wells  
 came to England. The organisers wanted the basis of  
 the society to be broad enough to deal with race  
 prejudice wherever it might crop up. There was a  
 deal of this prejudice in the English Colonies—in  
 South Africa, India, and Australia—and the society  
 wanted to bring influence to bear wherever race hatred  
 existed.—The resolution was carried, and after a pro-  
 visional committee had been appointed, the meeting  
 terminated.

Chapter 14

The Birmingham Daily Post of the same date  
 also carried a column of report of the same under  
 the caption of:

LYNCH LAW IN AMERICA.

A meeting was held yesterday, at the Young Men's  
 Christian Association Assembly Room, Needless Alley,  
 to hear addresses upon the treatment of the negroes in  
 the Southern States of the American Union. (In the  
 absence of the Rev. F. S. Webster through a severe  
 cold, Councillor S. Lloyd presided.) Amongst those  
 present were several ministers, members of the Society  
 of Friends, and ladies and gentlemen interested in local  
 philanthropic work. The Rev. F. S. Webster wrote:  
 "I have read with deep sorrow of the flagrant injustice  
 shown to the blacks in the Southern States, and trust  
 that public Christian sentiment will be sufficiently  
 aroused to protest effectually against the inhuman  
 practices which prevail." Alderman White, who was  
 away from Birmingham, wrote: "I have full sympathy  
 with the good work you are doing, and sincerely hope  
 our Birmingham meetings may be very satisfactory."—  
 Mr. R. L. IMPEY briefly introduced Miss Ida B. Wells,  
 an American negro lady, and expressed sympathy with  
 her object in coming to England. Miss WELLS, in a quiet,  
 but effective address, said it had been asked why she  
 should have come 4,000 miles to tell the people of Bir-  
 mingham about something that could be dealt with very  
 properly by the local authorities in America. She  
 thought her story would answer that question. Many  
 of those in this country who had interested themselves  
 in the anti-slavery agitation seemed to have thought that  
 the freeing of the slaves gave to the negroes in America all  
 the liberties which others enjoyed to make men and women  
 of themselves. Unfortunately that was not true. The  
 resentment of the southern white people about the  
 taking away from them of their slaves had never ceased  
 to show itself against the negro at any and every oppor-  
 tunity. For the first ten years after the war it was the  
 crime of using the ballot that formed the immediate  
 reason for murdering the negroes. Those massacres  
 would leave upon the Southern States of the  
 Union a stain that could never be wiped away.  
 Since 1875 the Southern States had been in possession each  
 of its own State Government, and the privilege had been  
 used to make laws in every way restrictive and proscrip-  
 tive of the negro race. One of the first of these laws  
 was that which made it a State prison offence for black  
 and white to intermarry. That was on the statute book  
 of every Southern State. Another of these restrictive  
 laws had only been adopted within the last half-dozen  
 years—it was one that made it crime punishable by fine  
 and imprisonment for black and white to ride in the  
 same railway-carriage. (Shame.) The general tendency  
 of the legislation of those States in regard to the negro  
 was directly retrogressive instead of progressive. Some  
 of these laws were only passed last year, so that the  
 recollections of the civil war could not be pleaded as an

excuse.

parts of America. A negro woman carrying a white  
 child would be received in a railway-car with the same  
 recognition as a white woman; but if an educated self-  
 respecting woman, with negro blood in her veins, could  
 get past the sentinel at the door, and entered as a  
 passenger in her own right, she would be dragged out of  
 the car with ignominy. Her presence would be regarded as  
 a contamination; that of the nurse would be very accept-  
 able. It was the same at hotels and in the churches. A  
 coloured man might be employed as a janitor or to ring  
 the bells, but he would not dare to walk into the church  
 simply to hear the preacher. (Shame.) A Christian  
 minister would not even administer the sacrament to a  
 negro side by side with a white communicant. (Shame.)  
 There was a double school system, and the provision for  
 the negroes' children was very inadequate. But for  
 a few institutions supported by northern philan-  
 thropists there would be no provision whatever in the  
 Southern States for the higher education of the race,  
 and this provision was woefully insufficient. The doors  
 of the churches, the Young Men's Christian Associations,  
 the temperance halls, and every avenue to influences  
 tending to the higher development of men and women  
 were closed against the negro. The administration of  
 the law was entirely in the hands of the white people, so  
 that there was no fear of a negro guilty of a crime being  
 able to escape the penalty. In proof of this Miss Wells  
 gave prison statistics, showing that for offences  
 ranging from mere fighting to ordinary larceny sentences  
 ranging from five to ten, and even to twenty years, were  
 inflicted upon negro offenders. Why, then, was it neces-  
 sary that a mob of white citizens, with all the machinery  
 of law and government in their hands, should take a  
 black man out of road and hang him to the nearest lamp-  
 post or bridge in a town, or the nearest tree in the  
 country; and, not satisfied with that, amuse themselves  
 by shooting bullets into the body. No self-respecting  
 mob in the Southern States considered that it had done  
 its duty until every man had lodged a bullet in the  
 body. In one case the mob ranged themselves  
 under the body, and were photographed, and a copy of  
 the picture was sent to a prominent advocate of the  
 negroes' cause. Among those thus photographed were  
 boys of four years old. Only one paper throughout the  
 length and breadth of the United States had the courage  
 to publish articles denouncing these crimes, and that  
 was the *Chicago Inter-Ocean*. (Applause.) Since 1882  
 over a thousand black men, women, and children had  
 been lynched. (Cries of "Abominable.") The vilest  
 charges were made against the victims, often  
 without any ground whatever, in order to shut  
 off the sympathy of the world, and as the  
 papers and the telegraph were in the hands of the  
 whites it was impossible to contradict these statements.  
 One-third of the victims had been charged with assault  
 on white women: the remainder with all sorts of crimes,  
 ranging from murder to that on which a man was hung  
 in Tennessee—namely, that he was "drunk and 'sassy'  
 to white people." (Shame.) Having given some particu-  
 lars showing the flimsy evidence on which people  
 who had afterwards been proved to have been  
 innocent were lynched, Miss Wells said that  
 when the woman assaulted was black, and the man who  
 assaulted her was white, the offender was not punished  
 even by due course of law. It was very clear that it  
 was not detestation of the crime that actuated the mob:  
 it was the class of person accused. The white man of  
 the South forget that in the war when their fathers and

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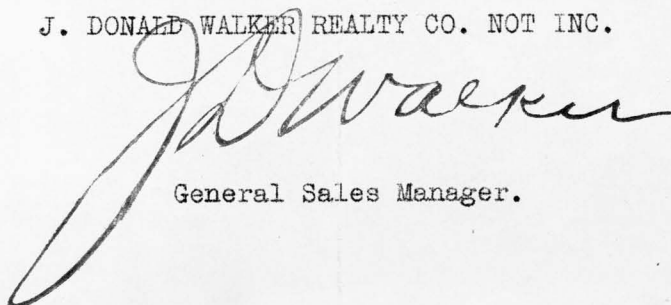
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left in the charge of the black men, against whose freedom their masters were fighting, and not one black man was accused of betraying his trust. (Applause.) The action of the mobs did not take place merely in out of the way places; it occurred in the thriving cities of the South—in New Orleans, in Nashville, Tennessee, in Memphis, and other populous centres. In Memphis, the city in which she edited her paper, the *Free Speech*, a place of 75,000 inhabitants, the first case of lynching was that of three men who had simply defended themselves against an attack on their prosperous business. They were the president, the manager, and the clerk of a grocery store, and there was every reason to believe that the authorities had acted in collusion with their business rivals. At midnight what appeared to be an attack upon the store was made, and the negroes in question fired upon men who turned out afterwards to be deputy sheriffs, and whose excuse was that they were searching for a man, who might have been arrested at any time during the day, and who was not known to be a desperate character. As soon as the negroes knew the facts of the case, they gave up their fire-arms and disclaimed any intention of resisting the officers of the law. They were put in prison, and, on the day after the announcement appeared that the wounded officers would recover, they were dragged out of prison by the mob and hung. The thing had been arranged at a meeting reported in the papers as consisting of "solid business men," and though the lynching took place at two o'clock in the morning, it was reported with names and the fullest details in a paper that went to press at three, showing that everything had been most carefully planned. And yet the verdict at the inquest was that the deceased met with their deaths at the hands of persons unknown to the jury. Articles on lynching appeared in the *Free Speech*, with the result that after an announcement in the leading paper of Memphis her office was wrecked, her manager was driven out of the town, and, with herself (she being in New York at the time), forbidden to return on pain of being shot. One prominent citizen had vowed to shoot her if she returned any time within twenty years, and a well-known Christian woman, though she had disproved of the lynching of the three men, had expressed approval of the course that had been taken with regard to herself. (Shame.) Having given details of other cases of lynching, including three in which the victims had been burned to death, and showing that the authorities could not or would not interfere, Miss Wells argued from the result of the anti-slavery agitation that British public opinion, if properly aroused, would have a good effect upon the people of the United States, and strengthen the hands of those in America who were desirous of putting an end to these cruel proceedings. In conclusion, Miss Wells read the following resolution, which she said had been sent to her unsolicited, and which was passed on Sunday night simply in consequence of what had appeared in the papers:—"Resolved, that this large body of Christian worshippers, assembled in Coventry Road Congregational Church, Birmingham—(applause)—records its opinion that the increasingly frequent resort in America to what is known as lynch law, particularly in the Southern States, and more especially by the white population against their coloured fellow-citizens, is in danger of lowering the high and deserved esteem in which the power of Government of that country is held by the most advanced nations, and tends to dim the glory of some of the splendid traditions of the Republic, the vast multitude of whose high-minded citizens we believe to be able and willing to redress any practice which is unworthy of a mighty and just people." (Applause.) In reply to a question, Miss Wells said that an attempt had been made, but without success, by representatives of the negroes, to approach the Senate and Congress on the subject. Also, at a conference of Southern governors, held a short time ago to consider the best means of promoting immigration and the influx of capital into their States, a deputation of negroes attended, but were refused admission, and told to state their business to the doorkeeper. (Shame.) The Southerners appeared totally unable to realise the common humanity of the negro with themselves, and that was why it was desirable that they should learn the views of Englishmen, whom they regarded as equal, and whose good opinion they valued. (Hear, hear.)—Mr. F. IMPEY proposed a resolution similar to that which Miss Wells had read, and this was carried unanimously, having been supported by Miss C. IMPEY, an English lady, who testified from personal knowledge to the facts related by the lecturer. X

In the evening a meeting was held in the Central Hall, Corporation Street, when the Rev. J. C. Street, presided, and Miss Wells and Miss Impey were among the speakers, and a resolution protesting against the tolerance of mob law in the Southern States was passed.

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1966 autobiography  
copy

# West Side Civic Republican League

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"REGISTRATION AND REPRESENTATION FOR ALL THE PEOPLE"

Dear Friend:

The West Side Civic Republican League extends a cordial invitation to you and your friends to join with us in a rousing general Ward meeting of the West Side Republican Civic League at 1504 W. 14th Street Friday night, March 19th, 1936 at 8 o'clock and we will greatly appreciate your presence and co-operation in our work.

For the first time in the political history of our ward, our men and women voters are made welcome in the practical work of building up the Grand Old Party organization in the 26th Ward. We have loyal and tireless in our devotion to our party leaders, but our active co-operation in party management has not been solicited nor permitted.

Desiring to help our party, our League offered its services to our Ward Committeeman, Thomas Curran, but we were refused recognition as an organization and told to join the Ward Club as individuals. Unless we acted upon plans made without consulting us, and without any regard to our interest in the political welfare of our own race, we could not be recognized. We were even denied the right to invite Dr. Bradden, a world-war veteran, one of our ablest race leaders, now a candidate for County Commissioner, to speak in our ward meetings, unless he agreed to speak for himself only and say nothing for other Republican candidates for nomination, except those selected by the Ward Committeeman.

The West Side Civic Republican League next offered its support to the Deneen group upon exactly the same terms offered to our Ward Committeeman, Thomas Curran. Our services were accepted and our officers and members, men and women, were given representation in ward management, according to our strength and party loyalty. We are given active management of the precincts controlled by colored voters. Serving on the Registration Board, Tuesday, March 23rd, we will have five colored Republican Judges and two colored clerks.

Come to our grand opening next Friday night. Hear our plans. Bring your suggestions. Offer your services and help us put the names of all colored voters in our two wards, the 26th and 20th, on the Registration Books next Tuesday, March 23rd. Seats reserved for ladies.

The West Side Civic Republican League.  
William W. Taylor, Pres.  
R. A. Armstrong, Secy.  
Walter E. Rogers, Chairman, Ex. Com.