

We conclude that the Northern white employer—apologist and rationalizer for de facto discrimination in employment that he is—can be moved. He is ready for change because readiness for change, even hopefulness for change, is predicated on the creed to which he subscribes. The best he can say for the arrangements in which, willy-nilly, he is implicated is that things are not so bad, they are getting better, and it would be risky to speed up the pace. The important thing is that these judgments are relative and pragmatic, not absolute. In the useful phrase of practical politics, they are “negotiable.”

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The Natural Law of Justice

THE STUDY OF JUSTICE inspired the greatest minds of the classical period and also those of the early Middle Ages.

The Roman jurist, Justinian, laid it down: “He is just who gives to each what belongs to him.” Whether or not this interpretation of the term would suit the politicians and sociologists of our time is hard to say, but one can very well imagine, from the way they employ it, that they are not seeking the justice referred to by the ancients. To them the matter was so important that they devoted more thought to the question of what it was and was not than to any other abstract term. Indeed, Plato made it the plot of his famous work, “The Republic.” And the inquiry conducted by Socrates led the controversialists to definitions which I have set in the following composite form:

Justice is the institution of a natural order in which a man can produce food, buildings, and clothing for himself, removing not a neighbor’s landmark, practising one thing only, the thing to which his nature is best adapted, doing his own business, not being a busybody, not taking what is another’s, nor being deprived of what is his own, having what is his own and belongs to him, interfering not with another, so that he may set in order his own inner life, and be his own master, his own law, and at peace with himself.

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