

Only Real Democracy Will Save Us From Armageddon

This conflict, already unparalleled, can have no peaceful solution if it becomes a race war. Somewhere, somehow, there must be a demonstration that men of different birth can live together in peace. No evading the issue. It is either tolerance between races or chaos.

"This is the worst week of the war . . . Such a week has not come to the United States since the blackest days of the Civil War."—News items.

"We have been losing this war from the time we began it, literally losing this war. We are being licked . . . The desire to please has so dominated the utterances of public officials that we have not told the people of America the God Almighty's truth about what we are up against."—Speech of member of Congress. —K. C. Call.

If Race, a difference which no man is responsible for and no fighting can change, becomes the issue of the war, civilization will be set back a thousand years. Japan with its "Asia for Asiatics" already invites that and England by its exploitation of colored peoples has encouraged it.

The hope of keeping this conflict on issues other than race, is our United States. We bear a great responsibility. We can and we must prove that men different in race can live together in mutual respect and peace. If we fail, the billion colored people in Asia, Africa, and the islands may feel that Japan shows the only way to a tolerable existence.

Far-seeing Americans have pointed out the "loss of face" which white nations suffer already as a result of Japan's victories. Over here we say "everybody loves a winner." Over there they side with him. Once the exploited peoples get the idea that Japan is a winner, they have revenge as well as self-interest to make them join the Japs. The tendency is there already. Note how little the Burmese under British rule do to stay the Japanese invader. On the other hand, the Filipinos to whom we have promised independence fight manfully.

Democracy pays! For that reason whoever weakens or destroys it is an enemy to our country, and to all men. We do not argue with whites who are prejudiced against black fellow citizens. Rather are we sorry for such irrational conduct. The passenger does not harm the ship because he dislikes the captain. Neither should the prejudiced follow their hate to the harm of the nation.

We grant that most race prejudice is more habit, than bad intent. But its victims never escape from under the sufferings it causes them. Japan knows that. A mob in Sikeston, a single victim and a small group of inconsequential killers, it uses as a text for propaganda that affects many millions across the sea. No question about democracy. It appeals to all men, because it is synonymous with liberty. Not the principle, but this country as its exponent is being

(Continued on Page Two)

More About Real Democracy

(Continued from Page One)

weighed in the balance by these millions whose aid we need.

From the day the United States endowed Negroes with liberty, citizenship and the ballot, race prejudice did not make sense. Today it is like the buttons on a man's coat sleeve. During slavery keeping the Negro poor and ignorant preserved the system. But one citizen in a real democracy stands on the same level as another. Quite different with ignorant natives. White supremacy wherever accepted by them, is the quick road to profits. It is the "divine right of kings" by which one man ruled a nation, applied to commerce.

Here in America, where democratic ideals require us to be all for one and one for all, caste distinctions are a handicap. Dual schools and all segregation based on race are not only worthless, but an actual loss to both races. In peace times, the relative security of the country did not force us to set our house in order. But today America is at war! There is a break in the levee. If we wait long to mend it, we perish!

Removing race prejudice seems a larger undertaking than it really is. The moment employers and labor unions grant that black men too have the right to work and earn a decent wage, the job is half done. That step is easily taken at this time when the demand for more workers is insistent. Let employers and labor union leaders, who are the commissioned officers of industry, do their part. Immediately the rank and file will fall in line, because contact with Negroes at work will prove how little the facts justify prejudice.

A clear picture of the feelings engendered in the victims of race prejudice is given by Shakespeare in "The Merchant of Venice." Changed to fit the present situation, it reads:

"Hath not a colored person eyes? Hath not a colored person hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same summer and winter as a white person is. If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? and if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that."