

WORLD WIDE

by Jack M. Thomas

What Is This Thing Democracy?

Wake Up, America!

One of the most dangerous enemies ever to confront this country and the way of life in which we live is gaining momentum in most regions of this country. This menace is much more dangerous than the Japs or the Germans could ever hope to have been. This enemy is within our very borders—within the very town in which we reside. It moves silently but surely. Most of the time we forget the consequences of this dreaded enemy of Democracy. Just what is this terrible menace that is threatening everything we hold so dear? Prejudice and Discrimination. The negative relation of some people toward other groups of people because of their race, color or religious belief.

Hardly a day passes that one does not pick up a newspaper and read of discrimination within our own country. There are enough instances of such discrimination to fill a large library. Such headlines as *Two Negroes Murdered by Gang of Youths*, or *Ku Klux Klan Notifies Catholic Family to Move*. These are only recent headlines picked at random. Within the past few months attacks upon Negroes in the South have increased threefold. The situation became so serious in Florida that the Governor of the state was forced to call upon the National Guard to quell the disorders.

Why do people select certain minority groups and treat them as they do? Are not the American people aware of the foundations of our democratic form of government? We demand that our male citizenry defend, and if necessary give their lives, to protect the ideals for which this country symbolizes. Yet when these individuals return to civilian status many of them are not allowed to enjoy the very things for which they were willing to die. Is that what Democracy stands for?

Is there a justifiable reason that warrants such action towards certain minority groups? Should all of us convert to Ku-Klux Klainers, Gerald L. K. Smiths or Father Coughlins? What minority stands opposed to our democratic principles? There is not one piece of evidence, whatsoever, that indicates that Negroes, Catholics or Jews are ready at a moment's notice to rise up and destroy our way of life. You may say, "But look at Paul Robeson. He is a Negro and he is also a Communist." For the sake of argument we will suppose that Mr. Robeson is a "Communist." But because he is a "Communist" does that indicate that the Negro race is also Communists? There are people of every conceivable color and religion openly opposed to Democracy. The very people who attack minorities are undemocratic.

Tonight a man speaks to the student body at the local high school. If you were to meet this man on the street you would think him to be a member of the white race. Yet Walter White is a negro. Mr. White has often remarked that throughout his lifetime people who were unaware of his color accepted him as "one of the group." But once it was discovered that he had Negro blood in his veins they shied away from him. This is a vivid illustration of prejudice as it exists in this country today.

Much too often people judge other people because they have a different color of skin, or they happen to attend another church. Are such things evil and dangerous to Democracy? What religion in this country does not speak of the Brotherhood of Mankind? Where in the Constitution does it mention of the superiority of one particular group over other groups? In a world wrought with false accusations the United States is called upon by the world to set an example of peaceful existence.

A golden rule to follow in your relation with all men is to accept the man as an individual without thought or regard for his color of skin, the church he happens to attend, or the social position his family happens to enjoy. Look deeper into the man than mere superficialities. If you love our democratic ideals and institutions you are called upon to destroy all evidences of prejudice and discrimination. There are no grounds to believe that Negroes, Jews or Catholics are opposed to Democracy. Give them the same opportunities to enjoy the freedoms which many of them were willing to die for.

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