

INFORMATION - THE STRENGTH OF DEMOCRACY

(Address given by Hubert H. Humphrey, State Chief of War Services Section, Minnesota Work Projects Administration, at the Annual Conference of the Minnesota Library Association, October 1, 1942)

This is indeed a unique occasion for me. An ordinary layman has been given the opportunity to talk about libraries and librarians in wartime. If it were not for my almost childish innocence of the wonders and pitfalls of library science, I should hesitate to speak, but as the old saying goes, "Fools enter where angels fear to tread."

I've always had a certain inexplicable respect for books and people who love good books. I've regarded librarians as the custodians and dispensers of our cultural heritage. That responsibility is of immeasurable importance even in times of peace; in days of war and social upheaval, the task is even more important. It behooves every person engaged in the library profession to reflect upon the duties that are theirs, and to resolve that in total war the cultural heritage of centuries of man's achievement shall become the storehouse of freedom.

It has been written that "Knowledge is power." Jesus of Nazareth said, "Seek ye the truth, and the truth shall make you free." With such pointed directives it becomes impossible to ignore the necessity of honest information - war information. A free and democratic people are essentially inquisitive. They ask "Why", they seek answers, and in their quest for information, become strong. In a war global in its scope, total in its intensity, the urgency of authentic information becomes impelling. After a generation of hoping for peace, and wishful thinking as to our own isolation, a war engulfs us. After the shock of military and economic mobilization, of defeats, of death and destruction, people search for the reason why it all happened. The library has the responsibility of fortifying the national morale by supplying the informational materials. Let there be no mistake about it, libraries are educational institutions, not mere recreational parlors. Librarians are educators, not file clerks and book dusters.

That the world is again engaged in a war is immediate testimony of the weakness and inadequacy of men of good will. That America closed her eyes to the real meaning and danger of a militant and brutal Fascism, demonstrates the failure of librarians and other leaders of the public will to adequately inform the ordinary citizen. We have been men of sand, when the times demanded men of steel. We have slept while our enemies worked overtime. The hour is late. If the victory is to be won, your civilization is to be saved, the men of democratic faith must move into action.

This war has been described as a "total war." Total in the sense that the military, economic, and ideological phases are all part of a total war effort. The enemy has not only mastered the art of integrating all three, but also has placed equal importance on each. Undoubtedly you do not lay claim to being military strategists or first-rate economists. These aspects of a nation at war belong to the generals and the economists. But ideas, ideology, and information are your weapons - your battleline. The insidious propaganda of Goebbels and his Nazi prevaricators has won many a battle for Hitler. The truth of democracy, the dynamic of freedom will crush the slavish barbarism of Fascism. This war will not be won by men and machines alone. The power of an idea, the courage that comes through reasoned understanding, these are the intangible, the secret weapons of a free people.

Total war means that this is your war. It is the struggle of all the people. Everyone is important. Everyone must be a soldier. Nor can there be any "business as usual." If industry and government must convert to meet the needs of a war economy, then surely libraries and librarians can lay no claim to exemption. It would be well for us to remember that if Hitler and his puppets win this war, libraries and librarians will not be excluded from the viciousness of the conqueror. It is in Nazi Germany that books are being and have been burned, that educators, clergymen, and librarians are and have been shot or placed into concentration camps. Hitler knows that books expressing the unfettered will of free men are leaves of freedom. The Nazi autumn has had its deadening effect - these leaves of freedom have been blown away from the tree of liberty. The attack on the mind and spirit of men has been and is today Fascism's most treacherous weapon. Democracy is not safe in a world consumed by fear, hate, intolerance, and dictatorship. But rather than allow your action to be determined by fear of what may happen if this war is not won by the United Nations, it would be more meaningful to recognize your own importance and strength and resolve to unleash the power that is in your hands.

I think it can be stated that most Americans know what and whom they are fighting against. It cannot be so definitely stated that they know what they are fighting for. Possibly even in that feeling of knowing what we are fighting against, there is not a clear understanding as to the complete antagonism between Fascism and democracy. Surely these two ways of life are the absolute opposite. In Fascism with its creed of a master race, its methodology of expedience and ruthlessness, its blind belief in the creed of "might is right" and force is the final test of greatness, along with its slave-like subservience to the will of the dictator, we can find no similarity to democratic principles.

Americans need to be informed as to the full meaning of a

Fascist victory and Nazi conquest. We need to know that under the totalitarian regime, men cease to be sacred ends or entities. The state becomes all-powerful and those inalienable rights around which we have built our social system are declared to be sheer fantasy and mysticism. Under the Fascist state, liberty becomes the right of the dictator to regiment the people; property becomes the sustaining reservoir of a military machine; life itself is as precarious as the will of the party. The gestapo, the Nazi elite, the dictator and the propaganda machine have but one aim, the moral and physical regimentation of men in order to accomplish the designs and will of the dictator. Librarians and educators have been too soft and too apathetic in their explanation and denunciation of this 20th century streamlined tyranny. Apparent illogical and irrational acts and statements have formulated themselves into the most dynamic and overpowering military and totalitarian crises that the world has ever known. Our own inability to recognize the essential destructiveness of Fascism and its leaders has in the past made us easy victims and will in the future, if we are not much more alert to the full meaning of Fascist mentality, provide the means of our own destruction.

Librarians have within their control the literature and the information that can expose the hideousness of our enemy. It can be clearly stated that you have not utilized the weapons at your command. Now is the time for action; now is the time to redouble our efforts and let America know what we are fighting against. As stated previously, it is not sufficient to know only who our enemy is and what he stands for. This sort of negative will to action cannot bring victory. It may arouse us sufficiently to win the military victory. Yet let us remember, victory is more than the military defeat of the enemy. Victory is the building of a new and better world. The hope of total victory lies in the willingness of the people of democratic faith to unleash the power that is theirs, to dream new visions, to chart new plans of social organization, to dare to try new ideas and make the so-called impossible a living, practical reality. This is what we are fighting for.

✓
✓
✓
Not only has our nation been on the defensive in a military sense but more important, our leaders of public opinion and our democratic statesmen have been of a defensive mentality in the realm of political organization and idealism. [Such slogans as "Let us defend the American way of life; let us preserve democracy," display ~~a military~~ *an* attitude of complacency and desire for the maintenance of the status quo. It is not enough to merely defend democracy or, as we say, "The American way of life." To defend it may be to lose it, to extend it is to strengthen it. Democracy is not property; it is an idea. Military victory on our part may not mean the preservation of this idea. It is ~~an~~ entirely possible that the viciousness of Fascism may infect our lives until we have lost the faith of a free people. That

is why in total war the military and economic aspects are not more important than the war of the spirit or the idea. We must recapture the audacious enthusiasm of democracy, a belief in the common man, a faith in ourselves and our God - these are the fundamentals of a free people. We must become so convinced of the essential soundness and truthfulness of the democratic idea that no amount of defeat, sacrifice, or suffering can weaken our conviction and loyalty to the principles on which we live or die.

We must be such devout adherents to the democratic philosophy that in the process of crushing the dragon of Fascism, we do not besmirch ourselves in the dragon's blood. This necessitates an understanding of the causes of the present war and the responsibilities for future world order that belongs to America. Here is a job that only librarians and educators can adequately perform. Planning for a future and better world will be of little use if we do not profit from our past experiences. The books, the literature, and the pamphlets of the past twenty years are invaluable documents in the experiment of a world struggling for security. The mistakes that have been made shall provide the experience for the charting of a better postwar world.

The hope of democratic government lies in the wisdom and virtue of the people. Surely if this century is to be the century of the common man, then the plain people, the little people, must be intellectually and morally equipped to make the right decisions. If America is to assume her proper place in a world needing rebuilding and redirection, this America must have the impelling force of public will to carry through. There can be no return to normalcy, no renunciation of our responsibility. We cannot repudiate a suffering humanity twice in one generation and still profess to be democratic and Christian people. Either we recognize and practice the basic principles of our moral and political faith - the dignity of the individual, freedom of conscience, and the brotherhood of mankind, or we forfeit the privilege of freedom and the claim to decency. Our task is almost overpowering; the world expects so much, and as yet we are ready to do so little. This time we must have it written, "Too little and too late."

Either we cast aside our political isolationism, or we must prepare for a more devastating conflict. Either we cast aside our indifference to the fate of other people, or these "other people" will threaten our own security. Librarians must provide the informational material to guarantee this new attitude. You must assume the responsibility of bringing to all Americans the news of the world in which we must live. Every community must learn of Russia, of China, of Africa, of all of the United Nations. If in wartime, under the pressure of patriotic zeal, we cannot learn to understand our allies, how can we hope to succeed in a postwar period? Today is the critical hour. How we fight this war, the attitudes formulated now, the political and

economic programs of today, will determine to a great extent the future. Today is the time to make the idea of an international organizations - the United Nations - a living reality. Now is the time to cement relationships between America, Russia, China, and India. This hope, this dream of all who wish for real peace, can only be possible if the people understand. America's future is not in the hands of a president or a general; the future of America is in the hands of main street - the ordinary citizen. You, the librarians, the teachers, are in touch with the citizen. What he is, what he thinks, how he acts, is due in a great measure to his educational guidance.

You are in the business of education; the job of creating a positive political and moral rebirth is, in part, in your hands. This war needs you. Librarians are technicians; librarians are leaders in their communities; librarians must have the will to act and place first things first in a struggle that may ultimately determine the course of our civilization. You profess to believe in democracy; it is time that we observe our professions with action. Democracy is a constant challenge; it requires the best of everyone. It cannot be bought in the market place; it cannot be merely legislated; its cost is measured in terms of blood, sweat, and tears. It is a challenge for the future; it is not a status quo; it requires men of courage and men of boldness; it must be ever restless and desirous of new victories. While to many of us it seems extremely fragile, it is in reality amazingly strong. It lives only where men are willing to think and study, plan and achieve, sacrifice and give. Yes, it is the "rocky road" but its durability, its essential perfectability is unequalled.

I have been asked to make some positive suggestions for librarians in wartime:

1. You must have the will to action. Make your library a vital dynamic institution in the life of the community.

2. Do not let the normal arrangement of library facilities stand in the way of developing a war information center. A poster or a sign merely stating that the library is a war information center is not the conversion to wartime needs that the times demand. War plays no favorites; you are not exempt from getting into line and doing your part. The American Library Association, the Office of War Information, and numerous other governmental agencies have requested that every library transform its facilities into an active war information center. Undoubtedly this will necessitate changes and additional work. Here again, I say, compare what you are doing with the sacrifice being made by the men of the armed forces of our country. Compare the little extra effort demanded from you with the sacrifice of the Russians before Stalingrad, of the Marines at the Solomon Islands. The world will have little sympathy with those who were unwilling to do their part.

3. You are being asked to organize your library into a war information center. This means bringing together in one place all books and pamphlets in the library dealing with any phase of the war. It is, of course, recognized that in larger metropolitan libraries this may not be possible, but even there, additional emphasis should be placed upon related war materials. Surely there is no excuse for anyone of the smaller libraries not to coordinate and collect all war books into a systematic arrangement that will attract the attention of the public.

4. Librarians have much to learn in the art of publicity and display. You are not running a monastery or merely a depository and vault for precious documents. The material in your library represents the life of a nation. If it is not used, if it is dusty, if it is hidden in times like these, then your library is not in the war effort. America is busy; America is changing; America is fighting. Your library should be doing all of these things.

5. A war information center necessitates the use and preparation of bulletin boards. Yes, more than mere boards tacked to a wall with a few book covers as displayed items. You need a bulletin board that is attractive, that is changed in terms of the train of events, that is conspicuously located so as to demand attention. This too, I know, will upset some of our most established habits of organization but again let me remind you, this is war and you are in it.

6. Much has been said about librarians being leaders in their communities. Maybe we should have stated that librarians should be leaders. You should get into the Civilian Defense organization; you should make your presence so important that libraries will receive their proper recognition. Your efforts in civilian defense should be directed towards informing the responsible personnel of the material and literature available for them and the community at the war information center. Not only is it necessary to be in civilian defense activities but librarians should be "joiners"; that is, get into the life of the community. Bring information about your war information center to the clubs, the schools, the churches, and other organizations of your city.

7. Just as an army needs new equipment, so does a library need new books. This world of ours is changing and changing at a pace which demands the closest attention of every thoughtful person. Wherever it is possible, every effort should be made to purchase new books of current interest, particularly those books dealing with the economic and political problems involved in a postwar era. After having obtained the new literature, for goodness sake, do not hide it under a bushel. Dramatize this material, display it, advertise it, and publicize the new merchandise which the public needs and wants.

8. Many of you may not have a large library staff and if that be the case, bring your problems to the attention of the Division of Libraries of the Minnesota State Department of Education. If you are pressed for time and short of helpers, request assistance in the organization of your war information center from the Minnesota Work Projects Administration, War Services Section. The War Information program of the Minnesota WPA is equipped with trained technicians to be of assistance to you. Facilities have been established for the orderly distribution of vast quantities of war information material, all of which can be yours merely for the asking. Display cards, posters, outdoor signs, and all sorts of related war information publicity material is available by contacting either the Division of Libraries or the Minnesota WPA War Services Section.

In conclusion, let us hereby resolve that when the history of World War II has been written, historians will record that the libraries were prepared to do their part, that librarians were soldiers on the home front, soldiers in the war of ideas, soldiers in the struggle for freedom.

11/2/42

Dear Dad:

Just another copy of a talk I gave before State Conference of Librarians. I gave an address extemporaneously & then was requested to write up my thoughts in an Article. This is to be published in the American Library Assoc. Journal. I want you to know that I spent only about 3 hours on this article. I dictated it to my secretary - been so busy I haven't had time for real first class writing - a surprise will be coming to you soon - thesis in Book form.

Want you to read this if

FEDERAL WORKS AGENCY
WORK PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION
INTER-OFFICE MEMORANDUM

To:

From:

Subject:

Date:

Reference:

you have the fame. Remember
It was written for librarians -
they are a timid lot.

Good nite, Dad,

your son
Hubert J.

INFORMATION - THE STRENGTH OF DEMOCRACY

(Address given by Hubert H. Humphrey, State Chief of War Services Section, Minnesota Work Projects Administration, at the Annual Conference of the Minnesota Library Association, October 1, 1942)

This is indeed a unique occasion for me. An ordinary layman has been given the opportunity to talk about libraries and librarians in wartime. If it were not for my almost childish innocence of the wonders and pitfalls of library science, I should hesitate to speak, but as the old saying goes, "Fools enter where angels fear to tread."

I've always had a certain inexplicable respect for books and people who love good books. I've regarded librarians as the custodians and dispensers of our cultural heritage. That responsibility is of immeasurable importance even in times of peace; in days of war and social upheaval, the task is even more important. It behooves every person engaged in the library profession to reflect upon the duties that are theirs, and to resolve that in total war the cultural heritage of centuries of man's achievement shall become the storehouse of freedom.

It has been written that "Knowledge is power." Jesus of Nazareth said, "Seek ye the truth, and the truth shall make you free." With such pointed directives it becomes impossible to ignore the necessity of honest information - war information. A free and democratic people are essentially inquisitive. They ask "Why," they seek answers, and in their quest for information, become strong. In a war global in its scope, total in its intensity, the urgency of authentic information becomes compelling. After a generation of hoping for peace, and wishful thinking as to our own isolation, a war engulfs us. After the shock of military and economic mobilization, of defeats, of death and destruction, people search for the reason why it all happened. The library has the responsibility of fortifying the national morale by supplying the informational materials. Let there be no mistake about it, libraries are educational institutions, not mere recreational parlors. Librarians are educators, not file clerks and book dusters.

That the world is again engaged in a war is immediate testimony of the weakness and inadequacy of men of good will. That America closed her eyes to the real meaning and danger of a militant and brutal Fascism, demonstrates the failure of librarians and other leaders of the public will to adequately inform the ordinary citizen. We have been men of sand, when the times demanded men of steel. We have slept while our enemies worked overtime. The hour is late. If the victory is to be won, your civilization is to be saved, the men of democratic faith must move into action.

This war has been described as a "total war." Total in the sense that the military, economic, and ideological phases are all part of a total war effort. The enemy has not only mastered the art of integrating all three, but also has placed equal importance on each. Undoubtedly you do not lay claim to being military strategists or first-rate economists. These aspects of a nation at war belong to the generals and the economists. But ideas, ideology, and information are your weapons - your battleline. The insidious propaganda of Goebells and his Nazi prevaricators has won many a battle for Hitler. The truth of democracy, the dynamic of freedom will crush the slavish barbarism of Fascism. This war will not be won by men and machines alone. The power of an idea, the courage that comes through reasoned understanding, these are the intangible, the secret weapons of a free people.

Total war means that this is your war. It is the struggle of all the people. Everyone is important. Everyone must be a soldier. Nor can there be any "business as usual." If industry and government must convert to meet the needs of a war economy, then surely libraries and librarians can lay no claim to exemption. It would be well for us to remember that if Hitler and his puppets win this war, libraries and librarians will not be excluded from the viciousness of the conqueror. It is in Nazi Germany that books are being and have been burned, that educators, clergymen, and librarians are and have been shot or placed into concentration camps. Hitler knows that books expressing the unfettered will of free men are leaves of freedom. The Nazi autumn has had its deadening effect - these leaves of freedom have been blown away from the tree of liberty. The attack on the mind and spirit of men has been and is today Fascism's most treacherous weapon. Democracy is not safe in a world consumed by fear, hate, intolerance, and dictatorship. But rather than allow your action to be determined by fear of what may happen if this war is not won by the United Nations, it would be more meaningful to recognize your own importance and strength and resolve to unleash the power that is in your hands.

I think it can be stated that most Americans know what and whom they are fighting against. It cannot be so definitely stated that they know what they are fighting for. Possibly even in that feeling of knowing what we are fighting against, there is not a clear understanding as to the complete antagonism between Fascism and democracy. Surely these two ways of life are the absolute opposite. In Fascism with its creed of a master race, its methodology of expedience and ruthlessness, its blind belief in the creed of "might is right" and force is the final test of greatness, along with its slave-like subservience to the will of the dictator, we can find no similarity to democratic principles.

Americans need to be informed as to the full meaning of a

Fascist victory and Nazi conquest. We need to know that under the totalitarian regime, men cease to be sacred ends or entities. The state becomes all-powerful and those inalienable rights around which we have built our social system are declared to be sheer fantasy and mysticism. Under the Fascist state, liberty becomes the right of the dictator to regiment the people; property becomes the sustaining reservoir of a military machine; life itself is as precarious as the will of the party. The gestapo, the Nazi elite, the dictator and the propaganda machine have but one aim, the moral and physical regimentation of men in order to accomplish the designs and will of the dictator. Librarians and educators have been too soft and too apathetic in their explanation and denunciation of this 20th century streamlined tyranny. Apparent illogical and irrational acts and statements have formulated themselves into the most dynamic and overpowering military and totalitarian crises that the world has ever known. Our own inability to recognize the essential destructiveness of Fascism and its leaders has in the past made us easy victims and will in the future, if we are not much more alert to the full meaning of Fascist mentality, provide the means of our own destruction.

Librarians have within their control the literature and the information that can expose the hideousness of our enemy. It can be clearly stated that you have not utilized the weapons at your command. Now is the time for action; now is the time to redouble our efforts and let America know what we are fighting against. As stated previously, it is not sufficient to know only who are enemy is and what he stands for. This sort of negative will to action cannot bring victory. It may arouse us sufficiently to win the military victory. Yet let us remember, victory is more than the military defeat of the enemy. Victory is the building of a new and better world. The hope of total victory lies in the willingness of the people of democratic faith to unleash the power that is theirs, to dream new visions, to chart new plans of social organization, to dare to try new ideas and make the so-called impossible a living, practical reality. This is what we are fighting for.

Not only has our nation been on the defensive in a military sense but more important, our leaders of public opinion and our democratic statesmen have been of a defensive mentality in the realm of political organization and idealism. Such slogans as "Let us defend the American way of life; let us preserve democracy," display a military attitude of complacency and desire for the maintenance of the status quo. It is not enough to merely defend democracy or, as we say, "The American way of life." To defend it may be to lose it, to extend it is to strengthen it. Democracy is not property; it is an idea. Military victory on our part may not mean the preservation of this idea. It is entirely possible that the viciousness of Fascism may infect our lives until we have lost the faith of a free people. That

is why in total war the military and economic aspects are not more important than the war of the spirit or the idea. We must recapture the audacious enthusiasm of democracy, a belief in the common man, a faith in ourselves and our God - these are the fundamentals of a free people. We must become so convinced of the essential soundness and truthfulness of the democratic idea that no amount of defeat, sacrifice, or suffering can weaken our conviction and loyalty to the principles on which we live or die.

We must be such devout adherents to the democratic philosophy that in the process of crushing the dragon of Fascism, we do not besmirch ourselves in the dragon's blood. This necessitates an understanding of the causes of the present war and the responsibilities for future world order that belongs to America. Here is a job that only librarians and educators can adequately perform. Planning for a future and better world will be of little use if we do not profit from our past experiences. The books, the literature, and the pamphlets of the past twenty years are invaluable documents in the experiment of a world struggling for security. The mistakes that have been made shall provide the experience for the charting of a better postwar world.

The hope of democratic government lies in the wisdom and virtue of the people. Surely if this century is to be the century of the common man, then the plain people, the little people, must be intellectually and morally equipped to make the right decisions. If America is to assume her proper place in a world needing rebuilding and redirection, this America must have the impelling force of public will to carry through. There can be no return to normalcy, no renunciation of our responsibility. We cannot repudiate a suffering humanity twice in one generation and still profess to be democratic and Christian people. Either we recognize and practice the basic principles of our moral and political faith - the dignity of the individual, freedom of conscience, and the brotherhood of mankind, or we forfeit the privilege of freedom and the claim to decency. Our task is almost overpowering; the world expects so much, and as yet we are ready to do so little. This time we must have it written, "Too little and too late."

Either we cast aside our political isolationism, or we must prepare for a more devastating conflict. Either we cast aside our indifference to the fate of other people, or these "other people" will threaten our own security. Librarians must provide the informational material to guarantee this new attitude. You must assume the responsibility of bringing to all Americans the news of the world in which we must live. Every community must learn of Russia, of China, of Africa, of all of the United Nations. If in wartime, under the pressure of patriotic zeal, we cannot learn to understand our allies, how can we hope to succeed in a postwar period? Today is the critical hour. How we fight this war, the attitudes formulated now, the political and

economic programs of today, will determine to a great extent the future. Today is the time to make the idea of an international organizations - the United Nations - a living reality. Now is the time to cement relationships between America, Russia, China, and India. This hope, this dream of all who wish for real peace, can only be possible if the people understand. America's future is not in the hands of a president or a general; the future of America is in the hands of main street - the ordinary citizen. You, the librarians, the teachers, are in touch with the citizen, what he is, what he thinks, how he acts, is due in a great measure to his educational guidance.

You are in the business of education; the job of creating a positive political and moral rebirth is, in part, in your hands. This war needs you. Librarians are technicians; librarians are leaders in their communities; librarians must have the will to act and place first things first in a struggle that may ultimately determine the course of our civilization. You profess to believe in democracy; it is time that we observe our professions with action. Democracy is a constant challenge; it requires the best of everyone. It cannot be bought in the market place; it cannot be merely legislated; its cost is measured in terms of blood, sweat, and tears. It is a challenge for the future; it is not a status quo; it requires men of courage and men of boldness; it must be ever restless and desirous of new victories. While to many of us it seems extremely fragile, it is in reality amazingly strong. It lives only where men are willing to think and study, plan and achieve, sacrifice and give. Yes, it is the "rocky road" but its durability, its essential perfectability is unequalled.

I have been asked to make some positive suggestions for librarians in wartime:

1. You must have the will to action. Make your library a vital dynamic institution in the life of the community.
2. Do not let the normal arrangement of library facilities stand in the way of developing a war information center. A poster or a sign merely stating that the library is a war information center is not the conversion to wartime needs that the times demand. War plays no favorites; you are not exempt from getting into line and doing your part. The American Library Association, the Office of War Information, and numerous other governmental agencies have requested that every library transform its facilities into an active war information center. Undoubtedly this will necessitate changes and additional work. Here again, I say, compare what you are doing with the sacrifices being made by the men of the armed forces of our country. Compare the little extra effort demanded from you with the sacrifice of the Russians before Stalingrad, of the Marines at the Solomon Islands. The world will have little sympathy with those who were unwilling to do their part.

3. You are being asked to organize your library into a war information center. This means bringing together in one place all books and pamphlets in the library dealing with any phase of the war. It is, of course, recognized that in larger metropolitan libraries this may not be possible, but even there, additional emphasis should be placed upon related war materials. Surely there is no excuse for any-one of the smaller libraries not to coordinate and collect all war books into a systematic arrangement that will attract the attention of the public.

4. Librarians have much to learn in the art of publicity and display. You are not running a monastery or merely a depository and vault for precious documents. The material in your library represents the life of a nation. If it is not used, if it is dusty, if it is hidden in times like these, then your library is not in the war effort. America is busy; America is changing; America is fighting. Your library should be doing all of these things.

5. A war information center necessitates the use and preparation of bulletin boards. Yes, more than more boards tacked to a wall with a few book covers as displayed items. You need a bulletin board that is attractive, that is changed in terms of the train of events, that is conspicuously located so as to demand attention. This too, I know, will upset some of our most established habits of organization but again let me remind you, this is war and you are in it.

6. Much has been said about librarians being leaders in their communities. Maybe we should have stated that librarians should be leaders. You should get into the Civilian Defense organization; you should make your presence so important that libraries will receive their proper recognition. Your efforts in civilian defense should be directed towards informing the responsible personnel of the material and literature available for them and the community at the war information center. Not only is it necessary to be in civilian defense activities but librarians should be "joiners"; that is, get into the life of the community. Bring information about your war information center to the clubs, the schools, the churches, and other organizations of your city.

7. Just as an army needs new equipment, so does a library need new books. This world of ours is changing and changing at a pace which demands the closest attention of every thoughtful person. Wherever it is possible, every effort should be made to purchase new books of current interest, particularly those books dealing with the economic and political problems involved in a postwar era. After having obtained the new literature, for goodness sake, do not hide it under a bushel. Dramatize this material, display it, advertise it, and publicize the new merchandise which the public needs and wants.

8. Many of you may not have a large library staff and if that be the case, bring your problems to the attention of the Division of Libraries of the Minnesota State Department of Education. If you are pressed for time and short of helpers, request assistance in the organization of your war information center from the Minnesota Work Projects Administration, War Services Section. The War Information program of the Minnesota WPA is equipped with trained technicians to be of assistance to you. Facilities have been established for the orderly distribution of vast quantities of war information material, all of which can be yours merely for the asking. Display cards, posters, outdoor signs, and all sorts of related war information publicity material is available by contacting either the Division of Libraries or the Minnesota WPA War Services Section.

In conclusion, let us hereby resolve that when the history of World War II has been written, historians will record that the libraries were prepared to do their part, that librarians were soldiers on the home front, soldiers in the war of ideas, soldiers in the struggle for freedom.



RACE HATE—The Enemy Bullets Can't Stop

THE end of the war is in sight. All that our armies and the armies of our allies have struggled for is in our grasp or within our reach. To accomplish this we have given unstintingly in men, in materials, and in money. We have made many sacrifices, and we are prepared to make many more until final victory over all of our enemies shall be ours.

What has been the justification for this enormous expenditure of American lives and American resources? Why have we made these sacrifices? For conquest? For power? For vengeance? No. Our war aims lie deeper than any of these.

All that we are fighting for, all that we seek in the council of nations, is determined by one fundamental purpose: to safeguard this nation as our forefathers created it, as later generations preserved and extended it, and as we intend to hand it on to our children. If we lose in this, we lose in all else.

Victory in this war could be snatched from us by a secret enemy here at home even as our statesmen are signing the agreements which would end military hostilities. This enemy can't be stopped by guns. It can be stopped, and overcome, only by an awareness on the part of each one of us of the real nature of our country's glory.

The true greatness of our country is to be found in an idea—an unshakable belief in the essential goodness of man, in the basic God-given equality of all men, in man's right to personal liberty and to the respect of his neighbors. Our ancestors—those who came here three hundred years ago and those who came thirty years ago—all saw in this belief the hope of a new, better life. They came here to escape the hatreds and animosities of the

It is a sobering fact that while we fight hate and prejudice abroad, these evils are increasing at home. One hundred million volunteers are needed to battle for American ideals

BY FRANK MURPHY

Associate Justice, U. S. Supreme Court

Old World, to live in a land where men could be truly free.

The Founding Fathers of the United States drew up a Declaration of Independence proclaiming that all men are created equal and endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights. Among these rights are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Once independence had been won, the framers of the Constitution secured these rights in law by incorporating them into a Bill of Rights guaranteeing freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of the press, and equality before the law.

This, the mainspring of American life, is what our enemies would have us destroy even while our armies are winning victories overseas. They would have us forget our belief in the equality of man and adopt their own false standards of race supremacy. They would see us divided against ourselves, our national strength consumed in racial and religious hatreds. The America our troops sought to preserve would then have been destroyed by our own hands.

This attempt to bring about civil strife

has met with more success than many of us care to admit. Propaganda aimed at setting one group against another has found its mark in many instances, and we have seen the sorry spectacle of religious bigotry and racial hatred rise where none had existed before. Or, where misunderstandings already existed, we have seen these misunderstandings somehow turned into animosities bitter enough to involve an entire city. And largely because a few hate-spreaders have accomplished their assignments.

Taking advantage of the high emotional state which prevails in any nation at war, these hate-spreaders have toiled systematically toward a set of definite objectives. Their ultimate aim is not merely to kill innocent people, or to slow our industrial production, or even to hamper our war effort by a temporary reign of terror. Their plan is to crush our trust in one another and so make it impossible for our republic, and our way of life, to survive. And after the war they will exploit whatever confusion and uncertainty may arise during the transition from a war to a peace economy.

RACIAL friction and religious persecution are unfortunately not new. Even the history of this country has not been entirely free from outbursts of bigotry. The Quakers of New England were early victims of religious intolerance. In the nineteenth century a political party, the notorious Know-Nothings, turned against newly-arrived immigrants and sought to deny the privileges of American citizenship to all but native-born Protestants. Still later, within the memory of our parents, Irish immigrants who came to America in large numbers were greeted with abuse and derision.

But none of these sordid movements ever dominated the American scene. The American people as a whole defeated the designs of a few hate-mongers and continued along their determined path of liberty and democracy.

Now, in our day, irrational hatred has again reared its head, aided by the strain of war and abetted by those trained in the ways of the Nazis. One species of this hatred is perhaps more threatening than any other. It is anti-Semitism.

Anti-Semitism, as an organized means of disrupting the unity of a democratic people, is a Nazi invention. It is aimed not only at the Jews but at democracy and Christianity as well. If we can be persuaded to use this crafty device to destroy ourselves from within, then the Nazis—and not the forces of the United Nations—will have won the war. The weapon which the defeated Nazis will have placed in our own hands will be the cause of our national suicide. At some future date a new breed of Nazis, foreign or domestic, will reap the spoils of real conquest.

This is not fantasy. Hitler has boasted publicly that the seeds of Nazism and anti-Semitism which he has sown will rise to plague us long after the German High Command has been forced to surrender.

Now is the time to stamp out all the traces of this Nazi-inspired bigotry, before it has a chance to get out of hand. The existence of anti-Semitism challenges every man and woman in the United States. Not only is American democracy threatened; Christianity is also threatened, and so I believe we Christians have a special mission to perform.

We must unite to combat anti-Semitism as a threat to both American and Christian principles. Fully conscious of the right of freedom of speech, we should not seek to throttle those who unwittingly are spreading ill will. Instead, we should point out the falseness of their arguments and, above all, expose the made-in-Berlin source of their wares. As for those who are deliberately seeking to destroy all that our Fathers fought for, and all that our sons are now fighting for, we should fight their propaganda with all the means in our power.

If you are tempted to utter a single anti-Semitic remark, no matter how harmless it sounds, or to commit a single anti-Semitic act, ask yourself if this word or deed violates your belief in the dignity of the individual, the right of personal liberty, or the equality of all mankind.

What are the means by which the anti-Semites hope to turn us against American Jews and eventually against the fundamental ideals of American and Christian life? The first method is to convince us that the Jews are to be blamed for anything and everything we happen not to like. The second method is somehow to create the impression that Jews are different from the rest of us—queer, impossible to understand, alien to American ways.

These charges are historically false as well as morally evil. Yet they have some-

times been accepted by Christians who are innocent of any malicious intent. These Christians cannot know very much of history, or else they would realize that everything now being charged to the Jews was once charged to the early Christians. The Church fathers were accused of belonging to an inferior people, of being aliens and agitators and of tainting the "racial purity" of other peoples. It is heartbreaking today to witness Christians, who were once a religious minority and subject to all the persecutions now inflicted upon the Jews, spread propaganda which—whether they realize it or not—is not only anti-Jewish but anti-Christian as well.

By anti-Semitism we mean something quite different from criticism of individuals who happen to be Jewish. There are good and bad Jews, just as there are good and bad Catholics, good and bad Irish, and good and bad persons of every other description. It is when we attribute our ills to Jews as a whole that we become guilty of passing on some of the poison brewed by our enemies. Or when we accept the master-race myth that a type of people called "Aryans" is in some mystic way superior to all others.

This notion of racial superiority is without any foundation in science, but is seized



Justice Frank Murphy

THE author of *Race Hate—the Enemy Bullets Can't Stop*, Frank Murphy, began life as a freckled-faced, red-headed Michigan farm boy. Today he is an Associate Justice of the U. S. Supreme Court. Justice Murphy was graduated from the University of Michigan law school in 1914 and served as a captain in the first World War. Back home, his legal career was high-lighted by a three-year term as Mayor of Detroit. In 1933 he was appointed Governor General of the Philippines and, shortly, High Commissioner. In 1936 he was elected Governor of Michigan. Three years later he was appointed Attorney General of the United States, and in 1940 he took his present job.

upon by some persons as solace in their troubles. They think their troubles are eased by the satisfaction of looking down on someone "beneath" them. What a low sort of satisfaction this is!

Each time a person says or does something derogatory to his Jewish neighbors he lowers himself and detracts from the spiritual progress of the human race. While he is injuring himself spiritually, he is also starting something which will lead to his own physical downfall. For bigotry is like a landslide: it gathers momentum as it spreads, finding one victim after another until everyone has suffered. It is true that the first victims of rampant anti-Semitism would be Jews, but the course of history has shown unmistakably that one form of hatred breeds another. Hate-maddened people would turn on a second minority and then on a third. Each one of us in America is a member of a minority in some way or other. Thus we would see our country torn into a multitude of warring groups.

ANTI-SEMITISM and the other forms of group hatred have caused incalculable

harm in the world, but never the slightest bit of good. Far from helping in the solution of any national problems, they destroy the very basis on which any problem can be solved—the spirit of mutual understanding and good will. Men's minds are diverted from the problem, and, instead of tackling it, they seek a scapegoat to blame for its existence. In short, hatred cannot remove any of our difficulties—economic, social, or political. It can only add new and more dangerous ones.

And how can any Christian honestly harbor any hatred of a group of his fellow men and still profess to believe in Christianity? Christ commanded us: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." He taught us that all men are neighbors, no matter what their nationality or convictions. The Brotherhood of Man cannot be accepted piecemeal. Genuine Christianity does not allow for love of one neighbor and hatred of another any more than it allows for obedience to one of the Commandments and not to all of them.

It was in keeping with this great Christian tradition that Pope Pius XI spoke of anti-Semitism: "It is a movement in which we Christians can have no part whatsoever. Anti-Semitism is unacceptable. Spiritually we are Semites."

The true Christian cannot stain his conscience with hatred of those of differing religious beliefs or ancestry. Nor can he remain indifferent to their sufferings under the tyranny of others. He will protect them from their enemies, give sanctuary to them in their need, and lend a brotherly hand in restoring to them peace of mind and physical security. To remain silent while the forces of evil are abroad is to give those forces aid and comfort, and this the true Christian cannot find in his conscience to do.

Today, of all times, is not a time for silence. The virus of anti-Semitism has already been well planted. I do not cry "Wolf!" when there is no wolf. The enemy is real. The forces of evil are not preparing to attack us; they are *already* battling us, under cover, cunningly, and with growing strength. The time to crush this enemy is now. One hundred million volunteers are needed to circulate sober, hate-quenching facts in every American home, farm, factory, union, church, and school, in the press and on the air. But, first, each volunteer should search his own conscience. Our first victory must be won within ourselves.

IF we are true to ourselves and our traditions, this nation cannot but fulfill its rightful destiny. There is in us all a real capacity for human kindness. The brotherhood of man is a living, growing reality. The future lies with those who will tear asunder the shackles of bigotry and reassert their faith in the dignity and independence of man. Our Christian tenets and our American heritage call us to this task. In deepening our love and understanding of our neighbors, we become better Catholics, or Protestants, or Jews—whatever our creed may be. In building a firmer spirit of unity among the peoples of our land, we become better Americans.

Out of this war must be born something better than the old hatreds in modern guise. The sufferings and sacrifices of our sons must not have been in vain. It is our duty to bring forth a nation more firmly devoted to its ideals, more invulnerable to the counsels of hate, and more fully conscious of its mission of justice and righteousness. Working together, we can achieve this lofty goal. Proud of the power of our country, we can be prouder still of our unflinching defense of the Rights of Man. We shall have remained true to the promise of America.

THE END



LAWS AGAINST PREJUDICE

IT LOOKS as if the next big wave of social reform in this country is slated to roll in the direction of efforts to legislate racial, religious and nationality discriminations out of employment. We mean laws to discourage employers who now won't hire, and unions which won't countenance hiring, Jews, Gentiles, Negroes, Catholics, Baptists, Germans, Irish, etc., etc.

New York State has led off the parade with its much debated Ives-Quinn Act, effective July 1st. This law calls for a five-member commission, to carry on chiefly educational and persuasive work against discrimination in employment, but it also provides legal penalties for cases where education and persuasion fail. Numerous other states are considering adoption of variations of the Ives-Quinn Act.

The trend seems a most interesting one to us. That discrimination based on prejudice is practiced here and

there in the United States is no news to anybody. Whether it can be gradually eliminated by carefully framed legislation remains to be seen; or whether, as the New York law's opponents predicted in the furious debate that preceded its enactment, such laws will only foster racketeering and blackmail and give a new lease on life to such things as the Ku-Klux Klan and the Black Legion.

Our feeling is that these laws can be made to deliver excellent long-range results if they are administered by people of courage and broad vision. The emphasis should be placed consistently, we think, on education and persuasion, with fines and jail sentences kept far in the background. Most people hate to be coerced, especially where their pet prejudices are concerned, but many people are amenable to argument.

One encouraging factor is that, so far as we can ob-

serve, the tide is already running pretty strongly against racial and religious bias in the United States. More and more of us appear to be realizing that this country is uniquely vulnerable to stresses and strains produced when people of all manner of descents and creeds live in the same community; and to be realizing, too, that we could wreck ourselves if we should let those stresses and strains get the better of us. More and more organizations are on guard against these dangers; more and more city authorities and civic groups are doing constructive and farseeing work to prevent race riots or break them up in a hurry.

It won't be laws that will finally solve our prejudice problems; it will be a realization by all of us of the fact that race and religious antagonism is bad medicine in a country which calls itself a democracy. But carefully drawn and shrewdly administered laws will help.

LAWS AGAINST PREJUDICE

For additional copies
write to
COMMUNITY SERVICE
15th Floor
386 Fourth Ave., New York City 16



Minnesota Historical Society

Copyright in this digital version belongs to the Minnesota Historical Society and its content may not be copied without the copyright holder's express written permission. Users may print, download, link to, or email content, however, for individual use.

To request permission for commercial or educational use, please contact the Minnesota Historical Society.



www.mnhs.org