

Between the Lines

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SOMEWHERE ALONG THE WAY

The stubborn, and apparently studied, refusal of a few GI's to be repatriated is a distressing development viewed from any angle. One seriously wonders what has produced such spiritual metamorphosis in our young soldiers. Out of all the sordid and sickening things we have heard and seen relative to communism, there are a few young Americans who are willing to let go by default their cherished American citizenship for the dubious advantages of communism.

- - If these GI's found something good in communism they must have found something bad in democracy. If they were attracted by some great tenet in communism they must have been repelled by some subverted tenet in democracy. And so it is not the part of wisdom to dismiss the decision of these young men as idle prattle of aberrated minds. So far as possible the fundamental cause should be ascertained and attended.

That should be one American willing to sacrifice life in America for life in Russia would be a startling matter; but when there are scores making this wretched choice, it is time to take stock of the tragic development. It is not surprising that a few Negroes are among the delinquent GI's. In fact there is some reason to the stand taken by the Negroes but absolutely none for the white GI's. In fact there is some reason to the stand taken by the Negroes but absolutely none for the white GI's.

The Negro has a grievance which is universally recognized. The all too obviously policy of fighting the Negro in times of war and striking him in times of peace is gradually eroding the moral texture of the race's hitherto unwavering loyalty to his country. Negroes are for the most part the most loyal contingent of American citizens. He has had to eat "scraps" from the table of democracy, while men of other national and racial breeds were feasting on the fat of the land.

- - But little by little the slight is having its deleterious effects on the Negro's morale. It is therefore not a little disturbing, even if explicable, when the Negro shows sign of breaking under the strain.

When the country attempts to round up communists at large, a few Negroes are apprehended and accused. When the time for repatriation comes in luckless Korea, a few Negroes are among these refusing to return to their native land. Whereas Negro leadership has vaunted long the fact of the Negro's unequivocal loyalty to this country, signs are appearing as they were bound to appear that a certain species of treatment as step-citizens is having the effect of depressing Negro's loyalty.

It is seriously to be questioned whether or not the Negro leaders are justified in having the world believe that the Negro will be loyal irrespective of how the country treats his claims to full-fledged citizenship. Whether the Negro leaders admits it or not, signs are not lacking that in the future, and perhaps in the nearer future than we imagine, Negroes are going to force the issue and refuse complete loyalty unless there are assurances commensurate with their sacrifices.

The more mature Negro leader, educated in the old missionary tradition, may perhaps cling to the doctrine that Negroes will be loyal on "general principles;" but the new Negro with the more scientific point of view will rise up and dispute him.

More and more Negroes are becoming increasingly willing to stand up and be counted as unwilling to fight for privileges for others he himself cannot enjoy! However reluctant we may be to face this ugly fact remains that Negroes are debating seriously this matter of fighting wars to entrench the forces for segregation and discrimination.

Somewhere down the line our great nation failed the young GI's in question. It might be profitable if we ascertained where and in what we failed these young Americans gone wrong.

The fault that young Americans can be inveigled into renouncing their American citizenship is not the fault of the communists and it is not their own fault; the fault is the nation's. Somewhere somehow and "somewhere" our great country failed these young men and failed them sadly.

The fact that a few young American soldiers have refused the advantages and privileges of repatriation does not prove that democracy is decadent and that communism is ascendant. It only proves that America has a fight on its hand if its would stem the tide of communism; it only proves that genuine democracy is the only safeguard against the insidious inroads of communists and communism.

There could be no greater mistake of policy than to take democracy for granted and take for granted the loyalty of the youth of the future. Unless democracy produces, the thing that makes the GI's disinclined to repatriate will compound trouble for tomorrow.

Somewhere along the way our great country failed these young GI's who have renounced before the world their American citizenship. The position of the Negroes is in a measure understandable, but not that of the white GI's. Somewhere along the way their loyalty was lost; but somewhere else along the way other youths must be saved.

The burden is on the nation rather than on the youth of the land.