

Taylor, Ruth

000631

A PLACE OF REFUGE

by

Ruth Taylor

"Only the mind cannot be sent into exile." Though Ovid wrote that centuries ago, like all truths, it is ageless.

Again and again in the history of our nation, it has been proven to us. Wave after wave of exiles from the strife, the hatreds, the discriminations and the persecutions of overcrowded Europe, have helped to settle and to build the nation which we hold to be the finest on earth.

Those who have come recently we call "refugees". However, this phrase wrongly sets them apart. Perhaps some among them are but refuge-seekers. Perhaps the minds of some are still overseas in their erstwhile homes. But these are but few among the great numbers who came here in the same spirit as our own ancestors - because America is the land of promise, the land where a man might still be free before his conscience and his God. Their bodies may have gone into exile, but their minds have enriched the country to which they have come.

Expressive of these Americans by choice, Earl Harrison, the United States Commissioner of Immigration and Naturalization, recently told a story which so impressed me that I want to repeat it here:

"A few weeks ago a leading attorney in one of our large cities was addressing a group of foreign-born petitioners who were about to be sworn in as American citizens. The speaker opened his address by saying that he was going to read several lines from the Preamble to the Constitution. As soon as he started, almost the entire group of petitioners - more than two hundred strong - recited in unison and from memory the lines he was reading. Incidentally, the man who reported the incident said that the speaker was about the only one in that room who had to read that part of the Preamble."

In commenting on his story, Mr. Harrison continued. "The days of unrestricted immigration are probably gone forever. But in the light of our history and the fine record made here by those who have come from other lands, we will undoubtedly keep our gates reasonably open. From the humanitarian point of view, we cannot do otherwise; from the point of self interest, new immigrants would be giving our country the strength that the infusion of new blood always brings to it, geared to the necessity of fighting for a democratic way of life; new Americans who, thanks to the colossal stupidity of the Nazi regime are rapidly enriching our nation with the fruits of their skills and their brains. There can be no doubt about the goals these people share in common with the rest of our population."

"Only the mind cannot be sent into exile." Let us rejoice that throughout our history America has been the refuge of the best from all nations and from all peoples.

WAR REFUGEE BOARD RECORDS

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For immediate release  
FOR THE RURAL PRESS

Charles Stelzle, Inc.  
512 Fifth Avenue  
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DO YOU KNOW THE ANSWERS?

by

Ruth Taylor

How often do you wake up in the middle of the night and think, "If I had only thought of that sooner, I could have answered you on that." I am sure all of us have had that experience. I know I have. We just aren't quick enough on the trigger and our second thoughts lag far behind our first.

One of the troubles with us who take democracy for granted is that we don't know the answers. We don't doubt for a minute the strength of our own institutions, the endurance of the democratic way of life - but we can't always say why we feel as we do. What would you give for not one, but four or five answers for any kind of an argument on Democracy?

My friends say I am always ready with the answers. Here's one of the reasons why. There's a little series of booklets which you may have seen for they have been widely distributed. These Joe Doakes booklets belong in every man's pocket, in every woman's purse, for they do express what most of us really believe, but don't always know how to say.

I have all four of the books on my desk as I write, for I like their tone. For instance, let me quote from one. "I am not an Optimist. I am not a Pessimist. I have no use for bunk, particularly foreign bunk. No one is going to make me hate the fellow who lives in the same block as I do." Now that's what I call American. Not hate at the beck and call of an outsider - but making up one's own mind according to the individual and the facts.

Far be it from me to suggest that, like the Nazis and Communists, we should have a line, but it's a good thing to read the answers as someone who has given a lot of thought to it has worked them out. We can then adapt them to our needs.

I have often used a quote from one of the booklets. "When someone keeps criticizing the way things are going, I tell him I never saw a ball game won by the noisy fellow in the bleachers who's yelling at the umpire and razzing the players. Games are won by the men in the field and the coaches and captains who stand back of them." That's plain common sense.

If you want to get copies of these booklets, send in to Joe Doakes, Room 707, 2 West 43rd Street, New York City, and they will be sent to you without cost. I recommend them because I believe they will help you as they have helped me to speak up for democracy and defend your faith as an American.

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For immediate release

FOR THE LABOR PRESS

Charles Stelzle, Inc.  
512 Fifth Avenue  
New York 18, N. Y.

ON AMERICANISM

by

Ruth Taylor

The other day I had luncheon with the two Americans whose opinions I value most highly. Of different professions, different backgrounds, different faiths, they are alike however in that they give more than lip allegiance to their common country. Here are their views on Americanism:

They were in accord that he who wishes to be a good American must be that and nothing more. He may and should respect the traditions of his ancestors but his lot is cast in America. Those who came here to escape the vicissitudes of the Old World contributed to the common pot. From that they drew not only the best of their own past, but the best of other peoples' traditions. As one man put it - America is mixed pickles. Everything has its own distinct flavor which adds to the general spiciness. The more perfectly the blending is done, the better the condiment. No one flavor must be predominant.

We are a heterogeneous people who are achieving homogeneity - which means that, coming from dissimilar origins we are achieving similarity because we have the common ideal of equality of opportunity, of equality of rights for all.

But they went further than this. They agreed that a good American does not classify his fellow Americans by their ancestry - whether the distinction be of color or of national origin. An American is an American, and until he proves himself to be disloyal, must be considered to be purely American - not German-American, Italian-American, Irish-American, Polish-American and so on. He who so classifies his neighbor is himself withdrawing into a clique that is not American.

They condemned wholeheartedly the criticism of people by groups, pointing out that there is no group - (and here is where their broadmindedness was shown, for each picked his own group for illustration) - where there are not corrupt members. They agreed that the proportion was probably the same in each group and he who condemned a group for the actions of a few, was laying himself open to equal condemnation.

One said he believed and would fight for any man who lived up to his beliefs, that the man he despised was the one who was not true to his own faith. He also said that if he discriminated against any men because of creed, he would be denying the tenets of his own faith, for he would be denying that all men are the sons of God. The other quoted his grandfather as saying that the essence of all true religions was in dealing with others as he would be dealt with - and that he had found this to be the practical way of life.

No - there isn't anything startling in this conversation. There is nothing with which you and I will not agree. It is the credo of Americanism - said by two Americans who realize not only their rights but their responsibilities in maintaining the American way of life.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
FOR THE NEGRO PRESS

Charles Stelzle, Inc.  
512 Fifth Avenue  
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LET THEM COME TO YOU!

by

Ruth Taylor

"Let them come to you." One of the best balanced men I know has adopted this as his slogan. He says that ever since he began to use it, his life has become simplified and things have gone his way. He doesn't try to impress people - and they appreciate his genuineness. He doesn't feel he has to talk if he hasn't something to say - and they like his calm. He can wait patiently without fussing - and he has found it pays in the dividends of friendship.

So it is with all of us. What applies to the individual applies to groups. Too many people are out seeking what they can get for themselves and their groups. How about reversing the process and letting them come to you? Set your own house in order. Be sure you are doing the right things according to your own code of life. If you are sure of yourself, it will show in your serenity of manner. Change is an easy way to dodge the issue - but it takes grit to stay put and be content.

"Of all the manifestations of power, restraint impresses men most." So said Thucydides many centuries ago. If we are not touchy, if we haven't a chip on our shoulder, if we can say "I am I. Either people are going to like me or they aren't. All I can do is to be as good a me as possible and then wait", half the battle is won.

The Psalmist said, "Wait and be not wearied in the waiting." That sounds like a pacifist doctrine but it isn't. I heard a labor man explain it once. He said he lived in a community where there was a definite animosity towards unions and toward union men. There weren't but a handful of trade unionists living there and there wasn't much they could do - except be good citizens. So when the call came for defense volunteers, they all joined in. And they did their jobs the best they could do. Being trained in organization, they did a good job. The labor man told me that one day he noticed that he hadn't been hearing anti-union talk lately. He asked his friends. They realized that they hadn't either. In fact, just by force of being themselves, they had changed the temper of the community. The union men had done their job and let the community come to them - and it did.

This is the one thing the minorities, whether they be industrial, racial or religious, can do. It is a sure way of making friends for yourself or your group. You can't enforce liking, you can't legislate friendliness. But you can be likeable, kind, cooperative and calm. That is within the power of every man, of every group. Let them come to you!

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June 2, 1944

Miss Ruth Taylor  
512 Fifth Avenue  
New York 18, N. Y.

Dear Miss Taylor:

Mr. I. M. Weinstein from this office will be in New York Monday. He has promised me that he will drop in at your office and give you the information you requested relative to the work of the War Refugee Board.

Mr. John W. Pehle is head of the War Refugee Board and his title is Executive Director.

It was good to talk with you yesterday, and I will be looking forward to a visit with you on your next trip to Washington.

Sincerely yours,

*W. Anne Laughlin*

Anne Laughlin

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